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THE ATHENÆUM.

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1828.

LONDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2.

No. 1.

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESENT STATE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

GREAT and rapid as have been the changes in all that constitutes the moral, political, and productive power of England, not one among the varied features of her character has within the same space of time undergone so thorough a revolution as her Literature. It is as different now from the state in which it was in a century ago, both in the number and nature of its productions, not merely as at any two periods in the history of the same country, but as the Literature of any two civilized and co-existing nations could possibly be. Whether the change has been for the better or worse, may, possibly, in some minds, admit of doubt, but of the certainty of the change itself there can be but one opinion.

The main cause of this, has been the increased wealth of the higher, and the increased knowledge of the lower orders of the people. These gave the first impulse to a demand for an increased number of books; and the very circulation which supplied such demand, served only to create fresh desires—so that cause and effect, continually revolving in a circle, have gone on producing and re-producing, with such an accelerating speed, that if we continue thus to advance in almost geometrical progression, we may contemplate, at no very distant period, such an accumulation of literary productions, as to verify, without hyperbole, the Oriental peroration of the Evangelist, who apprehended that 'even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.'

To the increased production of food, the limited surface of the earth sets bounds. To the increase of population, disease, poverty, and crime, operate as checks. And even if either of these attain, at any one period, a considerable superabundance, forth stalks the destroying angel, in the shape of famine, pestilence, or war, to sweep away the surplus, and bring back things to what, in the language of the modern school, is called 'their healthy and natural level.' Since the days of Omar, however, who burnt the Alexandrian Library,—because all the books it contained were, if they accorded with the Koran, unnecessary, and if differing from it, pernicious,—we have had no barbarian destroyer sufficiently powerful to stay the torrent of light and knowledge that is now fast covering the whole earth. Men die and disappear; the most skilful productions of their ingenuity or labour perish, and are forgotten; and even the most colossal monuments which their admiring contemporaries or successors erect to carry down their names and deeds to posterity, crumble into dust. But books—and books only—can be made to endure for ever. The pyramids may be razed to the level of the rock on which they were erected, or buried in the sands of the surrounding desert; an earthquake would effect the one, and a whirlwind accomplish the other. But the books in which the mysteries of the Egyptians, the history of the Jews whom they held in bondage, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, are described, can never perish. The Acropolis of Athens is in ruins,—the statue of Olympian Jupiter is no more,—the Parthenon is fast hastening to destruction,—and the ATHENÆUM, that sacred edifice dedicated to Minerva, in which the poets, orators, and philosophers of Greece recited their several compositions,—lives but in name. Yet Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, and Theocritus,—Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, and Sophocles,—Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch, and Thucydides, are still existing—still our own; the constant companions of hundreds, the occasional administrators of instruction and delight to thousands; and nothing short of that great conflagration, in which

The globe itself,
And all which it inhabit, shall dissolve,

can destroy these precious records of ancient wisdom, genius, and taste.

This difference in the durability of books, beyond all other productions of the human mind and hand, existed even in the earliest ages; because, being valuable only for the thoughts they contained, and these being capable of being transcribed from copy to copy, at a comparatively small expense of time and labour, the poets, orators, historians, and philosophers, of any one country, might be seen, read, and enjoyed, by all the intelligent people of another; and when worn out, defaced, or accidentally lost or destroyed, be reproduced, in exactly the same perfection, from some other existing copy; an advantage enjoyed by scarcely any other class of human productions. And let it be especially observed, that here the word is used for want only of a more accurate term; for, although a copy of a statue of Phidias or Canova, and a copy of a painting of Raphael or Rubens, would, by whomsoever executed, be strictly a copy, and could not convey an exact idea of the minute beauties or perfections of their respective originals, yet a transcript, or, in ordinary language, a 'copy' of Homer, in his own tongue, is strictly and truly an *original*; and, by whomsoever written or printed, preserves all its pristine excellence. Since the discovery of printing, however, and the increased facilities it affords to continual reproduction and multiplication, the difference is still more striking; so that now, more than ever, it may be truly said, that while almost all other things, even admitting their universally acknowledged merit, live but for a period, and are then doomed to perish and decay, books of standard worth continue to endure, by constantly successive renewal; and to those already existing are continually adding others, equally deserving preservation, so as to swell the general amount almost beyond calculation.

But—and it is to this, chiefly, that our observations have been tending—though some good has undoubtedly arisen from this facility of extending knowledge in every direction, and elevating the minds of the humblest of our fellow-men to considerations which, without such aids, would be altogether beyond the reach of their circumstances and their capacities; it may be doubted whether very considerable evils have not also sprung from the same cause, especially as affecting the higher and middling ranks of society; and whether the balance is not so equal, as to make men hesitate in giving a decided opinion as to its ultimate effects on the general interests of our country, and of mankind. Half a century ago, it was the privilege or the happiness of well-educated persons only to be *literary*: now, it is a character or quality to which the most ordinary minds lay claim. Mark the difference:—then, as in more ancient days, much fewer books were written, for there were fewer persons to read them; but such as were written, contained, frequently, the labour of a life, and at least aimed at reputa-

tion, by the only means then likely to obtain it, namely, by applying to their composition all the learning, genius, taste, and careful revision, which could alone ensure their favourable reception among the only reading classes then existing;—now, ten times the number of works are produced, but the labour of a few weeks is deemed sufficient for a history of one of the most extraordinary individuals, and one of the most striking periods of modern times! We have neither a Newton, a Locke, a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Hume, or a Gibbon among us at present; nor would the labours of such writers, if such there were, be in the smallest degree more popular or better rewarded now than at the period in which they wrote. Their places are filled, not by men, who, like themselves, wrote chiefly from their passionate attachment to the subjects and the principles developed in their writings, and the ardent longing after immortality, which could alone inspire and sustain such colossal labours,—but by writers who seek to gratify the caprice of the reigning taste, and obtain an immediate pecuniary reward, without reference to the good or evil that may result to others from their productions, or the reputation which may await their names beyond the present century. This *may* be the wiser course.—If

Happiness, our being's end and aim,
be best secured by momentary popularity and immediate pay, Sir Walter Scott's 'History of Napoleon' may have given him more pleasure, as it assuredly produced him more profit, than Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of Rome'; and, judged by this standard, Lord Byron's 'Don Juan' would be deemed a much more *valuable* poem than the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton, and the whole of Shakespeare thrown into the scale! But is this a change on which we can congratulate our country? Let the reader answer to his own conscience.

We have observed, that the facility of diffusing literary productions has operated, both as cause and effect, to produce and reproduce new wants and new supplies; and we may now add, that this it is, also, which has contributed, by the very increase of quantity, to deteriorate the value of such productions. This is the manner in which it operates:—In former days, when books were purchased by individuals, and became the undivided property of some one person who had to pay its whole price, great care was taken by the intending purchaser to inquire into the worth of the volume before he bought it: he might first have heard of it perhaps at some college or public institution,—he might have known something of the character of the writer, the bookseller, or the patron, all of whom were much more careful in associating their names with any work of inferior merit than at present; and being satisfied on these points, the book was bought by the principal literary men of the day. If really good, the sale was certain, though it might be slow: if bad, it fell into deserved neglect and oblivion. The case is now entirely different:—At present, (with very few exceptions, indeed,) it may be generally said, that no man in the middle class of life buys a book for his own exclusive use. He hears of it now through the advertisements of the public papers; and he may have it in his possession, in any part of England, within a few days after it is published in London, and peruse it from beginning to end at a circulating library for sixpence. Neither the name of the author, the bookseller, nor the patron, at all concerns him; it is sufficient that

the work is *new*: and as, whether good or bad, it is necessary to have some opinion of new books, in order to answer the inquiry which is sure to be started by some friend within the first week of its appearance, all new books are certain to be provided by the keepers of circulating libraries, where most of them are read, or at least glanced over, by the frequenters of these modern dépôts, and just as much only of their contents examined as the impatience and clamour of the next on the list of subscribers who may need them will admit. Before one work has gone the rounds of this unpurchasing circle, some other appears; and thus are the readers driven from the last to the next new novel, with such rapidity, that no images or impressions remain beyond the brief season in which they were first received. The 'Book of the day,' be it valuable or worthless, is as indispensable to the circulating libraries of all England, as the 'Paper of the day' is to the coffee-houses of London. Both must be had—not for the merits of either, but to satisfy the impatience of lounging visitors, by whom a good book, or an interesting paper, of the month or week preceding, would be held as utterly worthless; and the demerit of both, if of the latest date, be wholly overlooked in consideration of their novelty alone.

Under such a state of things, the wonder is—not that so few good books appear, but that any are ever published at all; for, where the fate of a work, on which the labours of a life, and the learning of an age, may be exhausted, is probable obscurity, at least for a long period, and a certain burthen of expense, never, perhaps, to be remunerated in the future; while the slightest web of fiction, or the most trifling enumeration of fashionable follies, which may be penned in a week, will bring 'golden opinions' in its immediate train—it would be marvellous, indeed, if the latter should not abound, and the former almost disappear from among us.

It has been the fashion to impute this inundation of trifling books to the bad taste of the publishers, as if they were the persons that gave an impulse to the public mind. But the slightest reflection will show that this is but a very superficial view of the subject. A publisher is merely a merchant who deals in books, as any other merchant deals in diamonds, opium, or wine; it is the business of the latter to provide a supply suited to the demand of the public taste: and if, from any cause, inferior gems are more in request than the finest brilliants,—if the coarse opiate of Bengal is more sought after than the purer drug of Turkey,—if intoxicating and highly-branded port is preferred by tavern-keepers and private families to the rich and unadulterated wines of Burgundy and Avignon, no one ever thinks of imputing to the suppliers of these wares an influence on the public taste. In like manner, if the wealthy and educated people of England will not individually and collectively pay the just price of works that cost an author years of study and research,—if the limited sale of such productions leave, in general, a loss to both author and publisher,—other and cheaper wares must be substituted, and the public be supplied with articles got up in haste to suit the market and the price. The fault, therefore, is in the public, not in the publishers; and the reform must begin at the true source,—among the people themselves, before it can be effected. While men of wealth and rank, who run through 50,000*l.* a-year, will freely appropriate 1000*l.* to their hounds and hunters, yet deem 100*l.* too much to expend on books; while persons of smaller fortunes will invest a capital of 1000*l.* in their wine-cellar, and hesitate at giving 10*l.* for a volume of acknowledged merit; while others of still more limited incomes, but who could well afford to expend 50*l.* a-year in the purchase of literary productions, choose to content themselves with a mere glance over the last new novel, for sixpence, and a hurried skimming of a newspaper lent out, for twopenny an hour, to a dozen families in suc-

cession,—Literature will continue to be, what it now is;—and productions easily prepared, and calculated only to satisfy the craving excitement of the moment, will keep their hold—to the prevention of other and more sterling works, for which the public, however profuse in other branches of expenditure are unwilling to pay: and thus, while valuable books will decrease in number and frequency of appearance, works of mere amusement will increase and multiply till they produce a total distaste for all other reading.

We hope and believe that we can render ourselves useful in assisting, at least, to retard, if not entirely to prevent, this growing evil. We believe it was Lord Bacon who first started the seeming paradox, that the number of books could only be lessened by writing other books; as Cicero had before observed, that he would have made his epistles much shorter, had he possessed time. We are persuaded that this, if it could be effected, would be one of the greatest benefits that could be rendered to mankind, for many more reasons than we can now state here; but chiefly, because the excessive multiplication of such productions as we have described, leads to distract the attention of men from objects more deserving their energies and care; to occupy their time and thoughts, to the injury of public liberty and the advancement of true wisdom; to substitute amusement for instruction, and to bring the highest privilege of our nature—that of communing with each other by the interchange of thought—down to a level with the thoughtless laugh of the jester or buffoon.

Is there not, then, a strong necessity for some counteracting power, to stem, if possible, the flood of degeneracy which threatens to overwhelm the public taste and character? No one, we think, can hesitate to answer. It is from this conviction that we have already erected one outwork of political resistance to this influx of second barbarism, in which we shall endeavour to maintain the cause of political and moral dignity and independence at least; and it is from this conviction, also, that we now desire to rear another, for the purpose of opposing, as far as our efforts can effect it, the torrent of dissipation, frivolity, and corrupt taste, which seems to threaten the extinction of all intellectual greatness or refinement amongst us, and which leaves to other nations, more especially to our great continental rivals, France and Germany, the glory of advancing rapidly in the career of useful and ennobling productions; while all our energies are wasted on that which should demand but at least a portion of them; and amusement, which should be the mere relief and solace of labour, or the delight and ornament, as we hope to make it, of intellectual study, is become the exclusive business of life.

How far we shall minister to this great purpose of literary reform, time alone can reveal. We ask, however, but the support of those who deem it desirable; and with their aid, we doubt not, that much may be accomplished; while their pleasure in its pursuit will be far more exquisite and lasting than that of any who look merely to the gratification of the moment, which, like all other stimulants, must be perpetually increased to produce its due effect, or leave the most painful vacuity of enjoyment on its abatement or suspension.

We may conclude this severe, but we believe, just picture of our own times, by adding, that we are far from despising works of fiction, which embrace some of the loftiest productions of human intellect, or under-rating the value of pleasurable and entertaining compositions. That of which we complain, is the senseless substitution, by the public themselves, of the mere ornament of life for its main pursuit. It is like painting and gilding a ship before supplying her with ballast, sails, and rudder,—or expending a life on acquiring the accomplishments of dancing, fencing, and music, to the utter neglect

of all useful or solid information. When the vessel is well equipped and fitted to endure the storms and tempests of the ocean, let her display her gilded carvings and silken streamers to the sun;—when the mind is stored with knowledge, let it be adorned with every ornament that can render it attractive or afford it pleasure. But let us not reverse the order alike of art and nature. The principles we have laid down, and the rules we here suggest for others, are those which will guide our own conduct in the execution of the duty on which we now enter. We shall endeavour, therefore, first to lay a foundation of solid and useful knowledge, and on this to erect a superstructure of as much harmony, ornament and beauty, as our own powers, and the encouraging aid of those who approve the design, will enable us to construct. If the edifice, so reared, be worthy of the name we have chosen for it, and, like the ATHENÆUM of antiquity, should become the resort of the most distinguished philosophers, historians, orators, and poets of our day,—we shall endeavour so to arrange and illustrate their several compositions, that they may themselves be proud of the records of their fame, and that their admirers may deem them worthy of preservation among the permanent memorials of their times.

NEW BOOKS.

An Essay on the Philosophical Evidences of Christianity. By the Rev. D. HAMPDEN, M.A., late Fellow of Oriel Coll. Oxford. Murray, London, 1827.

In looking at the present state of the English Church, it is impossible not to be struck with the low state of theological learning among her members. There have been periods in which no branch of our national literature shone with such excellency of learning, or sublimity of sentiment, as the writings of exalted churchmen. The most extensive stores of human knowledge, the profoundest depths of philosophy, and the brilliant fields of imagination, were all rifled and explored, to establish or illustrate the different dogmas of revealed religion. It was not the technicalities of theology, nor the spirit of controversial zeal, which occupied the pages of these writers, or poured into them such a fulness of thought; they were redolent with humanity and intellect; truth, instead of being shackled by the system they defended, took occasion from it to explore the loftiest tracts of human investigation; and the sincere convictions and solemn consciousness of responsibility under which they were written, gave the tone of deep and concentrated feeling to every sentiment they contained. Armed at all points with argument and doctrine, these fathers of the English Church struggled for every article of their creed with a giant strength and energy, and grappled with their opponents, as if they would win the victory by a stern and patient resolution.

But they were controversialists in doctrine only; the dew of a universal charity, the admiration of virtue, gracious and lovely in itself, the desire of diffusing happiness and knowledge among their race, tempered the severity of their subject with the outpouring of genius and benevolence. There may be found, we believe, in the works of these men, some of the most splendid efforts of the imagination that our literature possesses,—some of the most exquisite touches of pathos and of animated eloquence contained in any language of Europe. Compared with the theological writings of other nations, they possess a superiority in their varied illustrations, and in the excellency of their style, abstracted from their particular aim, apparent to the most superficial reader. We know of no writer of this class, in any country whatever, equal to our Barrow for copiousness and depth of reasoning,—to our Jeremy Taylor, for richness of imagination or extent of learning,—to our Hooker, for long drawn melody and mellifluousness of language,—to our Butler, for acuteness of philosophical obser-

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ration. Every other branch of English literature has its prototype or imitation in that of other countries; but the old school of British divines is distinguished from all others, by an originality, as far as their subject admitted originality, which renders them peculiarly our own, and which has been attained by the theological writers of no other country. Their works have the impress of strong national feeling,—of that deep and powerful sympathy with human emotions and aspirations, which give the charm to the best of our old writers in other classes of literature; and there is an easiness and fulness of expression in their digressions on morality, which delight us with their beauty and simplicity.

It is true, that several of the French preachers have left us specimens of the most brilliant pulpit eloquence; that Bourdaloue, Massillon, and Bossuet, deserve our respect and attention, both for the elevation and elegance of their style. But they were better orators than theologians; their excellencies were more of art than nature; they appealed to the feelings which float on the surface of men's hearts, and tasked themselves with correcting only the more palpable vices of society. In their most celebrated pieces, and most impassioned addresses, their language is, therefore, rather that of moralists using the doctrine of immortality for effect, than that of men overawed in heart and spirit by the sublimity of religious mysteries. It would not be easy, we allow, to find any thing more splendid in the sermons of our preachers, than the celebrated passage in Massillon, 'Sur le petit nombre de ceux qui seront sauvés'; or more affectingly beautiful than Bossuet's 'Description of the progress of life.' But excellent as these are, striking as they must have been when delivered, there is nothing to distinguish them from other general appeals to our moral susceptibilities, save the superior brilliancy of their language. We look in vain for the strength of expression, the settled dignity of thought, the elevation of minds accustomed to laborious but free research, which give such weight to the compositions of our divines, and fill them with graces well according with the results of deep abstracted meditation.

Much of this difference in the styles of these several schools is to be attributed to the opposite nature of their respective creeds, but still more is to be attributed to the separate circumstances and condition of their Churches; and we believe that the first and chief cause of the excellency of our old standard divinity may be found in the struggles with which Protestantism was established in this country, in the necessities of her infant state, and in the obligation imposed upon her advocates to labour incessantly in her defence.

But those who wish well to the national establishment, are deprived of the best argument that could formerly be used in its defence,—the vigilance, the zeal, and learning of its ministers; for, take away two or three of the bishops, a few of the inferior clergy who are publicly known as men of letters, and a few more whose particular party-opinions keep them in action, and it would be difficult to find a Church, either Roman Catholic or Protestant, in which the members seem to care less about its fundamental principles, or less remember the fearful events which passed before its establishment. We can at present but allude to this subject; but what we say, is founded on a certain knowledge of the present state of learning among the clergy of the establishment, to which we shall perhaps again allude on some future occasion.

We now turn to the work of Mr. Hampden, which merits attention, both for the intrinsic importance of its subject, and the great undertaking of which it professes to be a sort of sequel, or more properly, perhaps, a commentary. The 'Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion,' by Bishop Butler, is too generally known to need any remarks from us on its character or contents.

It is one of the few works of this class that possesses any share of popularity; and while we seldom meet with others, which we should have expected from their nature to find in more general circulation, there is rarely a library without the 'Analogy.' Its striking illustrations of the Christian scheme, and the powerful manner with which it brings natural and revealed religion, like two mirrors, to reflect each other, are calculated, indeed, to rivet the attention of the most careless inquirer after truth. There are, however, in the 'Analogy,' some occasional obscurities in the argument, which require no little patience, and even acuteness of thought to clear away; these Mr. Hampden has endeavoured, and with considerable success, to elucidate. Dividing his work into four parts, he has severally considered—the grounds of the credibility derived to Revelation, from a comparison of its system with that of nature, the importance of such a comparison, the nature of it, and, lastly, the objections to the employment of this kind of evidence. In each of these divisions he has manifested deep knowledge of his subject, and great power of argument; and has done very important service to the system of belief he defends, by placing the objections against it in their true light, showing their full extent and degree of force, and pointing out solutions of the difficulties where they are most required. The clear and lucid manner in which he has explained the nature of analogical reasoning, and its applicability to the evidence of a revealed religion, is particularly excellent, and shows, with great precision, the value to be placed on it. As the utility of every work on the subject greatly depends on the clearness with which this can be made out, we shall leave Mr. Hampden to speak for himself:

'There are two ways in which a judgment may be formed respecting the character of any revelation. Either we may judge of it by itself, referring those views of the Divine Being which it unfolds to us to the principles of our moral nature, which is the direct test of its worthiness to be received; or we may judge of it indirectly by comparison with that previous revelation of God which we possess in the natural world. The first mode of inquiry suggests an answer to the question: Is it such a revelation as the Divine Being recognized in the dictates of conscience, should give? The second mode of inquiry suggests an answer to the question: Is it such a revelation, as God has already given? Ultimately, indeed, the two questions converge into one; for they both tend to this point,—that God may have given the particular revelation into which we are inquiring; but in themselves they are really distinct in their end and their process. The first seeks to establish the morality of the revelation; the second to establish its philosophy. The first proceeds by *a priori* reasoning, assuming certain principles of divine truth as indisputable; and arguing from these to the necessary character which must belong to the God of the Scriptures. The second proceeds by analysis, taking the facts of the natural world and those of the Scripture for its data, tracing both to their general laws, and, by their coincidence with each other in such general laws, determining the likelihood that the God of Nature is also the God of the Scriptures.

'It seems almost unnecessary to prove, that the natural world may no less strictly be regarded as a revelation from God than the written word. But as it is upon this assumption that the whole inquiry proceeds,—for it would be impossible otherwise to bring into comparison with each other two such incommensurable things as an inspired book and the created universe,—we should be able to give a reason for this assumption; and the reason appears to be this: that we find in our minds an evident adaptation to the course of outward nature. The eye is not more adapted, by its peculiar structure, to the nature of light, nor are the lungs more formed with relation to the atmosphere, than the principles of our minds are adjusted to the world in which we live and act. Consider only that regularity which obtains in every thing that lives, or moves, or vegetates in the world around us, and how this regularity without us has its counter-part within us, in that principle of our minds which leads us to place an habitual dependence on the continuance of such regularity; a principle which is the basis of all our calculations and reasonings, and, in short, of our whole conduct in life. All our knowledge, indeed, is the result of

this adjustment of the principles of our minds to our condition, since it is the perception of facts, as they appear to minds constituted as the human mind is.

If, then, a divine author be acknowledged at once, of nature and of the mind of man, we cannot do otherwise than assign, as the final cause, the instruction which results from this admirable adjustment. And the whole course of nature, accordingly, so long as the mind of man is what it is, cannot but be considered in the light of a revelation from God.'—Pp. 2—7.

The system of analogical reasoning developed in the work of Bishop Butler, and in that before us, is one to which particular regard is due in the present day, when natural science and the doctrines of expediency so closely occupy and possess men's minds. The advocates of Christianity mistake their aim, whenever they forget that the first grand step in their argument should always be to remove the prejudice which exists against the system, prior to reasoning on the subject. It is of no use to demonstrate the morality or sublimity of its doctrines, till its naturalness is shown, or those sweeping objections to its inconsistency with nature be done away, which no subsequent consideration could meet. That the proof of an intimate analogy existing between nature and revelation, is most likely to effect this is certain; for, to those who believe in a Creator, or consider his character in any degree discoverable in his works, the idea of any unreasonable or impossibility in Christianity will remain no longer than the supposition of its inconsistency with the teachings of nature exists. In this respect, analogical reasoning is of the utmost importance; and though we are aware, that an improper use is made of it whenever it is applied to prove a truth, instead of removing objections to it, we are convinced, that nature in her details, in her tangible forms and operations, and in her unseen, but experienced wonders of thought and passion, is continually affording illustrations of the principles on which Christianity as a system rests, and illustrations which every man may make out, extend, and modify, according to his will.

We can truly say of Mr. Hampden's Essay, that it is well written, and profoundly reasoned, and that it richly deserves the honour of being placed by the side of the 'Analogy,' as an appropriate and worthy companion to that great work. Philosophically correct in its arguments, it every where breathes the tone of a fervent morality; and it can be read by neither the professor of natural religion only, nor by the believer in revelation, without affording a delight proportioned to the interest which they either of them take in the illustration of their several and opposite principles of reasoning or faith; a praise which can be scarcely awarded to one work in a thousand, on so profound and important a subject.

Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoleon, racontée par lui même, au Tribunal de Cesar, d'Alexandre, et de Frédéric. Par le General JOMINI. London, Ouleau. 1827.—Histoire de Napoleon, ornée de portraits, gravures et plans. Par Mons. de NOUVINS. London, Bossange. 1827.

The extraordinary man of whom we are about to speak, ought no longer to belong to our time, except as regards the lessons which may be drawn from his life; and it should only be with a mind perfectly calm, a recollection perfectly philosophical, that the history of the commencement, progress, and fall, of a greatness so colossal and so astonishing, should be undertaken. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Twelve years have elapsed since Napoleon descended from the throne, for seven years the earth has covered his remains, and a thousand judgments have been pronounced over his tomb, but no where has the language of unbiassed reason been heard. It may be said, that truth has never yet beamed with full light upon the life of this great man. Some, like General Gourgaud, have praised him as a cherished idol, equally exalting his political character and his knowledge of military arts, and making him,

in short, a model of greatness and magnanimity. Others, like Sir Walter Scott, influenced by party feeling, have been determined to see in him nothing but the despot, only allowing him to possess the talents of a general, almost incapable of forming the plan of a campaign, and for whom the chances of fortune supplied the place of genius. The first will not impute to their hero the smallest fault, the most trifling error; they contest with their adversaries every kind of merit, and even go so far as to accuse of perfidy those sovereigns who would not descend from their thrones to pay homage to his profound policy. Because he involved France in his own ruin, the last, in their turn, refuse to make any allowance for his constant solicitude for his own glory; because he has swallowed up immense resources in his gigantic enterprises, they deny that he ever possessed the love of order, or the talent for administration. In a word, this great man is, in their eyes, nothing more than a monster of ambition and cruelty.

This, however, was not the character of Napoleon; he neither merited so much indulgence nor so much severity. Madly in love with glory and military power, he never properly understood the principle of civil government. He was neither cruel, rancorous, nor vindictive, from inclination; but his temper was of so passionate a nature as not to support contradiction, and his pride so great as to admit of no equals. The history of this man, written by a clever and impartial pen, would be the most splendid legacy that the present age could make to posterity; it would be the most sublime subject of study both for nations and for kings. Going back to the time at which Napoleon, a simple officer of artillery, commenced his career, they would learn what evils the corruption of a court, an ill-regulated government, the abuse of power, and the ambition of great men, carry in their train; they would see the wonders that may be accomplished by devoted patriotism; they would learn, how a generous nation, which has just secured its liberties, may be despoiled of them, even by him to whom they had confided the care of confirming them.

This task has not yet been accomplished by either of the writers whose names are attached to the works before us. It is not an excess of severity, but of indulgence, which will have to be censured in their writings. They have not, like Sir Walter Scott, made themselves the interpreters of former hatred; they do not insult him in his tomb, because they know him to be without the power of defence; but, like Gourgaud, they are too much inclined to excuse the faults of the conqueror; dazzled by the brilliancy of his triumphs, they too easily forget that these very triumphs lent their aid in the destruction of that liberty to which he owed his elevation, of that republic which he had sworn to defend.

The career of Napoleon has been so astonishing, that his admirers, such, for example, as M. de Norvins, have believed that his childhood was also extraordinary. But they have deceived themselves; his early years exhibited nothing peculiarly striking,—his education was the same as that given at all the military schools. He succeeded in what he undertook, because he desired to do so, because his determinations were powerful, and his character decided. His combats with snowballs, whilst a pupil at the school of Brienne, when, at the same time engineer and general, he constructed the ramparts of ice, and directed by turns the attack and the defence, and was saluted by the name of Scipio or of Hannibal, might to a certain degree have shown his early taste for command, but no more foretold the warlike qualities which he afterwards displayed, than the following annotations, given by his professors, could presage the brilliant destiny which awaited him.

In 1783, the Chevalier de Kesalio, inspector of the twelve Military Schools, who had conceived a particular affection for Buonaparte, opposed his

being kept another year at Brienne. 'No,' said the inspector, 'I perceive in this young man a talent which cannot be too much cultivated.' A manuscript document, which belonged to Marshal Segur, then minister of war, contained the following note:

'School for the pupils of Brienne.—State of the king's pupils eligible by their age to enter the service, or to be transferred to the school at Paris, viz. M. de Buonaparte (Napoleon,) born the 15th of August, 1769; height four feet, ten inches, ten lines; has completed his fourth year of study; possesses a good constitution, excellent health, submissive disposition, is obliging and grateful, conduct very regular; has always distinguished himself by his application to the mathematics; he is tolerably well acquainted with history and geography; he is rather backward in ornamental studies and in Latin; he will make an excellent naval officer, and deserves to be transferred to the school at Paris.'

This note decided Buonaparte's admission into the Military School. M. de L'Equille, the Professor of History, spoke thus of the young Napoleon: 'He is a Corsican by birth and in character; he will go great lengths, if circumstances favour him.' M. Domaïson, who instructed him in the *belles lettres*, energetically styled his exercises, 'granite, heated in a volcano.'

On quitting the College, Napoleon found himself thrown on the theatre of the French Revolution; full of the maxims which he had so much admired in the Greeks and Romans, he carried his republican ideas to the greatest excess. A captain in 1789, he was created general after the siege of Toulon. The army of Italy was soon after indebted to him for a victory, gained under the orders of the General-in-Chief, Dugommier. Misfortune succeeded this glorious debut. The Government forgot the conquest of Toulon; Napoleon was neglected, and languished in distress at Paris, until the day of the 13th Vendémiaire, in which he saved the Convention, and which was the first step of his brilliant fortune. But how little was it necessary for him to renounce the destiny which was opened to him! M. Jomini makes Napoleon himself relate his hesitations on that important day:

'The Convention resolved to employ force in order to pass its decrees; and the Sections resolved, on their side, to make use of force to compel it to dissolve. I did not feel any great interest in these debates, because my attention was much more occupied with foreign war, than with interior policy. I entertained no idea of sustaining a part in this delicate affair. If the Austrians had not 150,000 men at the gates of Strasbourg, and the English forty ships of war before Brest, I might perhaps have taken the side of the Sections; but when the country is threatened by foreign war, it is the duty of every citizen to range himself under those who hold the helm. It was proposed to me to command, under Barras, the armed force against the Parisians. In my character of General, I preferred placing myself at the head of my troops, to throwing myself into the ranks of the Sections, in which I should have nothing to do.'

After the day of the 13th Vendémiaire, which raised Napoleon's power so high, the Convention had decreed the general disarming of the Sections; and this became, according to M. de Norvins, the singular cause of Buonaparte's marriage. Every house had been searched with so much rigour, that not a single weapon of any description whatever had been left behind. One morning, a child of about thirteen years of age was introduced into the house of the young General; he came to claim the sword of his father, a Republican General, who had died on the scaffold. This child was Eugene Beauharnais. The sword was restored to him: his mother was anxious to return her thanks to Buonaparte,* and shortly after she became the wife of him who was already adorned with the title of the Great Man. To the National Convention succeeded the Directorial Government. The necessity for placing at the head of it a military man capable of directing great operations, had first placed Carnot there; intrigue afterwards brought Bar-

selves politicians elected Kewbel; and chance made the other two choices. Napoleon, who, from jealousy, had been left by the Convention in inactivity, was again elected General-in-Chief of the Italian Army, and accomplished those brilliant conquests which so suddenly raised him above the greatest captains of modern times. It was at this moment, when a General of the Republic, he fought for liberty, that he was really a great man. His campaigns in Egypt continue to astonish us—to excite our admiration,—but already Napoleon began to nourish projects hostile to freedom. We cannot help rendering the homage due to his great actions; but we no longer entertain affection or enthusiasm for himself.

Quitting Egypt, he arrived at Paris; and the 18th Brumaire became the epoch of a new era for France, and fatal to liberty. Under the name of Consul, Napoleon seized the reins of power; he attached the army to him by conferring marks of honour on bravery and courage. He penetrated into Italy by the route of Hannibal; gained battles by hundreds; and, covered with trophies, he succeeded in getting named Consul for life, by a senate composed of old men, totally devoid of energy: shortly after which, the citizens of a Republic found themselves the subjects of a sovereign. Arms of honour, that noble and simple reward, instituted during the Consulship, were then forgotten, and replaced by gifts, orders, and titles. Buonaparte had ceased to be a citizen—he had made himself an emperor.

Liberty only sought to defend itself—despotism thirsts for aggression; and the soldier who occupied that throne no longer contented himself with being the first of sovereigns—he aimed at being the only one. During twelve years, he carried despotism, ambition, and glory, to their greatest possible height, forcing his country to betray him, and all Europe to unite in dethroning him.

But the subject grows under our hands. We shall pursue it more in detail in our next.

The British Almanack for 1821: Published under the superintendence of 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.' Baldwin. London, 1820.

THE annals of the human race never, perhaps, offered a more remarkable instance of the power which custom possesses of reconciling men to the grossest absurdities, than is exhibited in the various modifications of palpable imposture, impudent mendacity, vulgar ignorance, and low obscenity, gathered together annually in the metropolis of the enlightened British Empire, and discharged upon the whole population, in the shape of the Almanacs published by 'the Company of Stationers.'

For many years the painful observation of thinking men has been fixed upon these most contemptible productions. During the last quarter of a century, the progress of knowledge amongst the people has constituted a new and wonderful era in the history of the country. In the remotest parts of Great Britain the superstitions of the vulgar have been gradually uprooted and destroyed;—the ability to obtain sound information has become almost universal, through the general diffusion of the blessings of Education; improvements in science, effecting the greatest practical changes, have been appreciated and hurried onwards by the growing intelligence of the people; and, altogether, the mind of this country has exhibited an energy and elasticity quite without a parallel in the records of civilization. Yet during this extraordinary period, and up to the moment when we are writing, a class of publications, which are more than any other species of book in the hands of persons of every degree, and being thus the objects of daily consultation, must have some decided influence upon their habits of thought.—THE ALMANACS—have continued wholly unchanged; precisely of the same character

* General Jomini says that it was Buonaparte who first visited Madame Beauharnais.

that they held in the days when witches were burnt, and horoscopes were drawn; utterly uninfluenced by any of the modes of thinking which have marked the emancipation of the present generation from ignorance and credulity; quite unsusceptible of shame at their solitary ignorance and depravity. And yet these publications are issued by 'the Company of Stationers,' a body of men comprising the most wealthy, and individually, respectable of the Booksellers of London; a body who derive considerable revenues by the sale of these detestable impostures; a body who pay to the Government something like 40,000*l.* per annum, as the tax upon these execrable poisons. This is, in truth, the secret of the shameless effrontery—the insult to the English people—which is thus offered by a Company who ought to watch over their intellectual advancement with something like a kindred spirit, instead of thus endeavouring to perpetuate the grossest errors, and to propagate the most filthy abominations, in the only publications which they issue in their corporate capacity! Individuals would feel themselves disgraced by the most distant connection with the publication of such trash; and we assert, without hazard of contradiction, that no bookseller, except that very small number who pander to the grossest vices, would dare to issue such a farrago of filth, obscenity, and stupidity, as is this *very* year published at Stationers'-Hall, & sold by George Greenhill, Treasurer to the Company, under the name of 'Old Poor Robin.' Their almanacs are altogether so bad, that the individuals composing this body ought to feel that some portion of the public indignation attaches to them personally. If they could be brought to feel thus, we are sure that their individual sense of propriety would lead them to repent of their corporate offences against decency and good morals; and that public opinion may operate in producing so desirable a result, we print the names of those in authority:

OFFICERS OF THE STATIONERS' COMPANY FOR 1827.

MASTER.—Richard March, Esq. WARDENS.—Mr. Thomas Turner; Mr. William Griffith. ASSISTANTS.—Sir W. Domville, Bart., *Lord Mayor of London* in 1813-14; William Venables, Esq., *Alderman, and Lord Mayor of London* in 1825-26; John Key, Esq., *Alderman of London*; John Crowder, Esq., *Alderman of London*; S. A. Cumberledge, Esq.; Andrew Strahan, Esq., *Printer to the King*; Thomas Smith, Esq.; Mr. Joseph Collyer; Mr. Thomas Payne; Mr. Edward Brooke; Mr. Joseph Gardiner; Mr. Charles Rivington, *Bookseller to the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge*; William Wacker, Esq.; Mr. William Marston; Lewis Peacock, Esq.; Mr. William Witherby; Mr. Thomas Bensley; Mr. James Harrison; Roger Pettward, Esq., F.R.S. and F.S.A.; Mr. Joseph Baker; George Woodfall, F.S.A.; Mr. Charles Foundrinier.

An attempt was made some thirty years ago by this same Company of Stationers, to establish a monopoly in almanacs. The pretence was beaten down by the eloquence of Erskine; and the question was set at rest for ever. The Worshipful Company then proceeded upon their twilight career in another mode. They bought up the almanacs which individuals, from time to time, endeavoured to establish, and they either suppressed them altogether, or, having adopted them into their list, insinuated their own poison into the really useful matter they contained, so as to degrade them to the level of their oldest and most successful, because their worst, publications. They did this in the case of 'Moore's Almanack Improved,' which was originally published by a large wholesale consumer of almanacs, of the name of Wills. That book now contains astrological predictions of the same stupid and impudent character as those of its prototype, 'Francis Moore, Physician.' It is thus that a monopoly has been as effectually preserved, as if it had been legally sanctioned. Indeed, it is difficult to establish any rival work, from the large expenditure of capital required, in the outlay of ready money for the stamp duty, amounting to one shilling and three-pence upon each copy. The Company of Stationers have thus, to the present hour,

reigned lords paramount over an important and intrinsically useful branch of popular knowledge; and this authority and influence they have prostituted to the most degrading purposes.

We felt ashamed almost of our country for even tolerating such absurdities, when, a few months since, we were looking over an almanac published at Hobart's Town, and which was noticed in 'THE SPHYNX.' Here, in an infant colony, founded under auspices not the most favourable to the morals and intelligence of its inhabitants, is produced an almanac, not only undeformed by the ridiculous astrology of the English almanacs, but containing much valuable information on the agriculture and statistics of this fine region. Is it not degrading to our national character, that a population composed, in great part, of the outcasts of English society, should, in this particular, be satisfied with useful and nourishing food, while we are content to feed on garbage?

If we turn to the almanacs of other nations, the same deplorable contrast with our own is observable. The 'Almanac de Saxe Gotha,' which, although it has been established sixty years, is not marked by the imbecility and ignorance which accompany the old age of Moore and Partridge, is a most useful and sensible production. This work has an enormous circulation on the continent, and it deserves it. It comprises the Reformed, the Gregorian, the Greek, the Jewish, and the Turkish Calendar; has the most authentic lists of the Royal Families and Ministries of Europe that are published; and, besides, contains chronological and statistical tables of great labour and accuracy. But not a word has it foretelling the changes of the weather, or the destinies of nations. Of the same useful and sensible character are several of the French Almanacs. The edict of Charles IX. of France, prohibiting almanac-makers from predicting the fates of governments or individuals, is not now in force; and we can only account for the deficiency, in this particular, of the German and French Almanacs, by considering that they are not under the enlightened guidance of a 'worshipful Company of Stationers.'

We cannot accuse our Government of any desire to perpetuate the national disgrace of our almanacs; but it is remarkable, that, as if they were afraid of the contrast, the stamp has been this year required to be affixed to all foreign almanacs sold in this country. This stamp, with the duty upon importation, amounts nearly to a prohibition. It is this enormous stamp which, as we have before observed, has principally enabled the Stationers' Company to maintain their almost exclusive power of publishing these manuals. Individuals have been deterred from any well-compacted endeavour to supply such almanacs as the people ought to have, and loudly demand, by the enormous outlay required for stamps; and by the small rate of profit upon such an expenditure. Were the tax reduced to a rate so moderate, that almanacs could be sold for a shilling, we apprehend that the revenue would not lose by the reduction, and individuals would be much more at liberty to produce almanacs, that have some affinity with the intelligence of the age. As the matter has stood, and now stands, any individual opposition to the wealth and influence of the worshipful Company would fail to produce any very extensive improvement.

Under these circumstances, it affords us the sincerest pleasure to observe, that THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE, amongst their other highly valuable exertions for the improvement of their countrymen, have published an almanac. We happen to know that their resolution to attack ignorance and imposture in one of its strongest holds, was only taken after an examination of the almanacs for 1828, published at the end of November last. The almanac now produced exhibits how much useful information may be collected together in so short a space of time, by the energy and intelligence

of such a body of zealous and enlightened men. 'The British Almanac' must drive the rubbish of the Stationers' Company out of the field. The people cannot longer endure to be insulted in their understanding and their moral sense as they have been. The almanac of the Society will take root and flourish, when Moore and Poor Robin are remembered only as a remarkable illustration of how long the upas-tree of ignorance may cling to the earth, when nourished and watered by a skilful monopoly, supported in its opposition to all rivalry by a crushing taxation.

From the 'Preliminary Observations' of the 'British Almanac,' we extract a passage or two, briefly and modestly stating its claims upon universal support:

'The almanacs most in demand are remarkable for the mixture of ignorance and imposture which they contain, with much useful matter; and it is not very creditable either to those who prepare, or to those who buy them, that their circulation should be so extensive, and that the worst by far are those chiefly used by the people. The conductors of the work now presented to the public wish to disseminate all the information usually contained in an almanac, with other useful notices of the same description, and some matter of a more general nature and of higher value.'

'The oldest almanacs are those of Moore and Partridge, which have survived their authors above a century, and continue to be published as their works. These works profess, in the plainest terms, to foretell the weather even to a day; stating that on one day there will be rain, on another snow, and on a third thunder. They also prophesy as to political events with nearly equal confidence, though not quite so distinctly. Thus, one says, that at a particular time "there will arrive good news from Cadiz, Scotland, and Naples;" and another tells you, that, about such a date, "a great minister will be impeached," or "a dignitary of the church driven from his perferment." Nor are they free from party politics: one gives intimations, and even prints, of a nature calculated to set different religious sects in conflict; and another dates the year as the 150th from the "Horrid Popish Jacobite Plot;" thus keeping alive, for the purpose of exciting religious animosity, the memory of transactions which are a disgrace to the character of this country, and the worst blot upon the history of its law,—affirming as real, crimes in a great degree imaginary,—and grossly mistaking even the notions respecting the plot which prevailed at the time. Some parts of these almanacs are not marked by much regard to decency; but there are others, also greatly circulated, which are utterly obscene, and could never be admitted into any decent house, had not habit, unfortunately, reconciled the community to such things, as well as to the absurdities of their astrology.'

'From every thing of this description the present work is carefully purified; its conductors pretend not to foretell the weather, because the science of meteorology is far too imperfect to furnish the means of any calculations, beyond very general inferences, from the course of past seasons to the probable aspect of the future. They profess no knowledge of future political events, because these depend upon the thoughts and actions of men, and are utterly unconnected with the movements of the heavenly bodies, upon which the ignorance and superstition of dark ages fancied them to hinge. The place of such vain and hurtful, because misleading speculations, will be supplied by pure and useful information; and the whole quantity of matter in this almanac will be increased to nearly twice that of the old ones, in order to afford further room for conveying instruction upon important subjects.'

Fully, indeed, are these professions realized. The little work before us, although sold at two shillings and three-pence, the same price as the cheapest of the trash published under the name of Moore, Partridge, and Poor Robin, contains at least *treble* their quantity of matter, and that matter is of the most useful and instructive nature. The calendar is constructed in the clearest manner; there is no parade of science; every information is given for popular application, and all that is superfluous is retrenched. The space which is occupied in 'Moore's Almanack,' by a filthy repetition of the parts of the human body, as influenced by the moon, is here filled with a most complete list of the anniversaries of great events, discoveries, and births and deaths of eminent men; the ridiculous predictions of the changes of weather are sup-

planted by meteorological averages of the greatest general utility; sensible remarks for the conduct of life stand in the place of doggerel rhymes; the common tables of tides, and other changes, are clearly arranged; and the duration of sunlight and moon-light is indicated by a most ingenious contrivance, by which it may be seen, at a glance, whether the moon will shine at any given hour of any particular night. A supplement to the calendar gives some very plain directions for the preservation of health, and for the management of a farm and garden; and the miscellaneous registers contain very ample lists, comprising the most generally important parts of the 'Red-book.' Add to this, the almanac is a model of typographical beauty, and we shall confirm the general impression of the obligations which are due to the exertions of 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.'

There are many, perhaps, who do not examine the almanacs published by the Company of Stationers, who would think it impossible that so highly respectable a body would be open to the charge which is raised against them, of circulating obscenity. We might refer them to the impudent astrology of 'Francis Moore, Physician,' and ask them, if, *primâ facie*, they would think that a Company, who number amongst them four Aldermen of London, would publish predictions which they *know* to be utterly false, when any one of those very Aldermen would send any travelling fortune-teller, that was dragged before them, for six months to the treadmill. But we will be more particular—that is, as far as we can without offence to our readers. From page 10 to p. 16, of 'Old Poor Robin' for 1828, are passages that we will undertake to say are as gross and licentious, as beastly and depraved, as were ever prosecuted by 'the Society for the Suppression of Vice;' and though we have no violent respect for the general proceedings of this society, we seriously consider, that they would do well to show their impartiality, ('since laws are made for every degree,' by instituting an immediate prosecution against 'George Greenhill, Treasurer to the Company, at their Hall in Ludgate-street,' for issuing such filthy abominations. Further we will not allude to this revolting subject.

We must conclude with a specimen of 'Worshipful' Wit. Poor Robin is the oracle of the village alehouse, and sometimes of the squire's kitchen. Let us see the Christmas merriment he offers to his readers. We take the running titles of each page, printing them *singly*, as they occur in the book:

Head Lines.

Faith,
I'd aigh forgot 'em!
Lines! a' death!
What then?
Od rot 'em,
I don't know,
And what's mair,
'f it don't snow,
I don't care.
But if it freezes,
It may if it pleases,
And then I sneezes,
And my nose blow.
Give me.
What?
A pocky 'ankerchers
What for, ho?
Because I
Sne—sne—sneezes,
And my nose blow.
Ha! ha! ha!
How funny I is
In December!

Bob! Bob!
Yes.—You write,
Proper well—Don't I!
No Bob.—What!
You write—
What?
Bad grammar, Bob!
What!
Take care, take care,
For if you dare
Say so again,
I'll break your scull,
And that I woul,
With my
Gold-headed cane.
But I say Bob,
Did't you, you snob,
Both write and say,
'The other day,
In kicking up
Your breezes,
How funny I is, and—
How I sneezes.

We print this most execrable stupidity as a specimen of the filth of the Angean stable, which the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge has to clear out. The thing is almost incredible—it is too monstrous even for a Civic Company to laugh at over their potatoes upon a Lord Mayor's Day. But we must leave 'Poor Robin' and his rabble for worthier objects. It is painful to witness intellectual degradation, whatever form that abasement may put on,—whether the folly sneaks with its cap and bells into dark corners, or swaggers through the land with a 'Worshipful' imprimatur.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS.

MR. THOMAS MOORE AND LORD BYRON.

We are fortunately enabled to gratify our readers, by giving, in our First Number, a very early extract relative to the two of the most prominent individuals described in Mr. Leigh Hunt's forthcoming work, entitled 'LORD BYRON AND SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES.' When the book is before us we shall review it with strict justice. For the present, we content ourselves with presenting the extract, which will no doubt be eagerly read.

MR. THOMAS MOORE.

'I thought Thomas Moore, when I first knew him, as delightful a person as one could imagine. He could not help being an interesting one; and his sort of talent has this advantage in it, that being of a description intelligible to all, the possessor is equally sure of present and future fame. I never received a visit from him, but I felt as if I had been talking with Prior or Sir Charles Sedley. His acquaintance with Lord Byron began by talking of a duel. With me it commenced in as gallant a way, though of a different sort. I had cut up an opera of his, (the "Blue Stocking,") as unworthy of so great a wit. He came to see me, saying I was very much in the right; and an intercourse took place, which I might have enjoyed to this day, had he valued his real fame as much as I did. I mean to assume nothing in saying this, either as a dispenser of reputation, or as a man of undisputed reputation myself. I live too much out of the world, and differ too plainly with what is in it, to pretend to be either one or the other. But Mr. Moore, in his serious as well as gayer verses, talked a great deal of independence and openness, and the contempt of common places; and on this account he owed it to his admirers not to disappoint them. He was bound to them the more especially, when they put hearty faith in him, and when they thought they paid him a compliment in being independent themselves. The reader has seen to what I allude. At the time I was speaking of, my acquaintance, perhaps, was of some little service to Mr. Moore; at least, he thought so. I am sure I never valued myself on any service which a very hearty admiration of his wit and independence could render him. It was involuntary on my part; I could not have helped it; and at all times, the advantage of personal intercourse would have been on my side.

'Mr. Moore was lively, polite, bustling, full of amenities and acquiescences, into which he contrived to throw a sort of roughening of cordiality, like the crust of old port. It seemed a happiness to him to say "Yes." There was just enough of the Irishman in him to flavour his speech and manner. He was a little particular, perhaps, in his orthoëpy, but not more so than became a poet; and he appeared to me the last man in the world to cut his country, even for the sake of high life. As to his person, all the world knows that he is as little of stature, as he is great in wit. It is said, that an illustrious personage, in a fit of playfulness, once threatened to put him into the wine-cooler; a proposition which Mr. Moore took to be more royal than polite. A Spanish gentleman, whom I met on the Continent, and who knew him well, said, in his energetic English, which he spoke none the worse for a wrong vowel or so: "Now, there's *Moore*, Thomas *Moore*! I look upon *Moore* as an active little *men*." This is true. He reminds us of those active little great men who abound so remarkably in Clarendon's history. Like them, he would have made an excellent practical partisan, and it would have done him good. Horseback, and a little Irish fighting, would have seen fair play with his good living, and kept his look as juvenile as his spirit. His forehead is bony and full of character, with "bumps" of wit, large and radiant, enough to transport a phrenologist. His eyes are as dark and fine as you would wish to see under a set of vine-leaves; his mouth generous and good-humoured, with dimples; his nose sensual, prominent, and at the same time the reverse of aquiline. There is a very peculiar character in it, as if it were looking forward, and scenting a feast or an orchard. The face, upon the whole, is Irish, not unruined with care and passion; but festivity is the predominant expression. When Mr. Moore was a child, he is said to have been eminently handsome, a Cupid for a picture; and, notwithstanding the tricks which both joy and sorrow have played with his face, you can fancy as much. It was a recollection, perhaps, to this effect, that induced his friend, Mr. Atkinson, to say, one afternoon, in defending him from the charge of libertinism, "Sir, they may talk of Moore as they

please; but I tell you what; I always consider him," (and this argument he thought conclusive,) "I always consider my friend, Thomas Moore, as an infant, sporting on the bosom of Venus." There was no contesting this; and, in truth, the hearers were very little disposed to contest it.—Mr. Atkinson having hit upon a defence which was more logical in spirit than chronological in the image. When conscience comes, a man's impulses must take thought; but till then, poetry is only the eloquent and irresistible development of the individual's nature; and Mr. Moore's wildest verses were a great deal more innocent than could enter into the imaginations of the old libertines who thought they had a right to use them. I must not, in this portrait, leave out his music. He plays and sings with great taste on the piano-forte, and is known as a graceful composer. His voice, which is a little hoarse in speaking, (at least, I used to think so,) softens into a breath, like that of the flute, when singing. In speaking, he is emphatic in rolling the letter *r*, perhaps out of a despair of being able to get rid of the national peculiarity. The structure of his versification, when I knew him, was more artificial than it has been since; and in his serious compositions suited him better. He has hardly faith enough in what he does, to give way to his impulses, except when they are lively; and artificial thoughts demand a similar embodiment. But he contemplated the fine, easy-playing, muscular style of Dryden, with a sort of perilous pleasure. I remember his quoting with delight a couplet of Dryden's, which came with a particular grace out of his mouth:

"Let honour and preferment go for gold;
But glorious beauty isn't to be sold."

'Beside the pleasure I took in Mr. Moore's society as a man of wit, I had a great esteem for him as a man of candour and independence. His letters were full of all that was pleasant in him. As I was a critic at that time, and in the habit of giving my opinion of his works in the Examiner, he would write me his *opinion* of the *opinion*, with a mixture of good-humour, admission, and deprecation, so truly delightful, and a sincerity of criticism on my own writings so extraordinary for so courteous a man, though with abundance of balm and eulogy, that never any subtlety of compliment could surpass it; and with all my self-confidence, I never ceased to think that the honour was on my side, and that I could only deserve such candour of intercourse by being as ingenuous as himself. This admiring regard for him he completed by his behaviour to an old patron of his, who, not thinking it polite to retain him openly by his side, proposed to facilitate his acceptance of a place under the Tories; an accommodation which Mr. Moore rejected as an indignity. If any body at that time had told me, that our new and cordial Anacreon, who counted a lofty spirit among his luxuries, could do a disingenuous thing, or sacrifice a cause or a free sentiment on the fat altars of aristocracy,—a sweet-smelling savour unto a lord,—I should have answered, that all that might be in the common course of the prose of this life; but that nobody knew what superiority there was to conventional deductions in the very weaknesses of a poet.

'I remember our astonishment in Italy (Lord Byron's included) at the flaming panegyric passed by Mr. Moore upon England, and all things English, at a dinner in Paris. It was his farewell dinner, if I recollect, when leaving Paris for London. Either the English panegyric or the Irish Melodies were certainly much in the wrong; nor is it easy to decide what Captain Rock would have said to it. But the invective against Rousseau and poor Madame de Warens, in Mr. Moore's Rhymes on the Road, was still more startling. Madame de Warens is not a person to be approved of in all respects, perhaps in very few. She had a kind heart, but a dangerous ill-regulated will, and might at least have abstained from loving the sour-faced gardener, and sacrificing her natural love of truth to degrading secrecies. But nobody thinks otherwise of her than she was; and Mr. Moore's denouncement was, to say the least of it, superfluous. These things may be safely left to the heart of the community. The evil mixed with them may even suggest a better good, if discussed handsomely and sincerely. Madame de Warens was a means of setting one of the most extraordinary minds that have appeared in the world, upon speculations not the less interesting to humanity, because coteries, not so good as herself, choose to cant about them. Mr. Granger, the biographical painter of portraits, who was a clergyman, and did not think it necessary to show a "zeal beyond knowledge," would have been charitable enough to call her "open-hearted," which is an epithet he does not scruple to give even to the meretricious Duchess of Cleveland. Mr. Moore, on the other hand, instead

of taking her along with him as he ought to do, and trying how kindly he can unite his own moral improvement with that of "exquisite mothers" in general, thinks fit to shake his Anacreon laurels at her, and call her a naughty woman. I would have done, if I were he, with this two-o'clock-in-the-morning penitence, with maudlin tears in its eyes; and set myself to the task of reformation in a more masculine and social style. It is not handsome of him; it is not grateful; it is not gallant. Human beings are all worth being mentioned with common humanity; and we make poor amends for offences we may have committed ourselves, by reproaching those who have sinned with us. The great thing in this world, is to learn what to do, and how to carry humanity forward; not to reproach any one; no, not even ourselves. We should reproach ourselves only for petty and useless feelings, and the want of a real sympathy. If Mr. Moore, as he once told me he did, thinks it useless to attempt improvement in this world, he is at least not very reasonable in thinking it necessary to repeat maudlin common-places, for the sake of their eternal reproduction; for they do nothing else. The world will continue to laugh with his gaieties, and think nothing of his gravities; let him give as many premiums for pleasure and penitence as he may.

A word respecting the suppression of Lord Byron's autobiography. The public have seen a letter of Mr. Moore's, stating how it was that the manuscript of his friend's Life came to be destroyed, and how his Lordship's family would have reimbursed him for the loss of the profits; an offer which, from feelings and considerations "unnecessary" then "to explain," he "respectfully but peremptorily declined." The meaning of this is, that Lord Byron presented Mr. Moore with the Life for the purpose of turning it into money; that Mr. Moore did so, and got two thousand guineas for it; and that although he had no objection to receive money in this way, he had in any other. I do not insinuate that he might as well have accepted the money then offered; but Mr. Moore, on this and other occasions, has been willing to give the commercial British public to understand, that he has a horror of pecuniary obligations, though it seems he has no objections to pecuniary worth. This, I confess, is a splitting of hairs, which I do not understand. If a friend is worth being obliged to, I do not see how a man is less obliged, or has less reason to be so, by accepting his manuscripts than his money. It is an escape, not from the thing, but the name; and if I were the obliger, I confess I should draw a different conclusion from what Lord Byron may have done, respecting the real regard or spirit of the man, who thought so ingeniously of my Life, and so awfully of my guineas. That the tenure of the noble Bard's respect in this matter was indeed very precarious, is evident from the bill he brought in against Mr. Dallas; a leaf from the ledger of his Lordship's memory which, I think, must have startled Mr. Moore.

Mr. Dallas having made a preposterous statement of the value of his zeal and advice, in encouraging Lord Byron to be a poet, and observed that it far outweighed, in his opinion, the six or seven hundred pounds obtained by the copyright of "Childe Harold," which the noble Bard had given him, his Lordship makes a per contra statement, as creditor, in the following

"MEMORANDUM.

"Two hundred pounds before I was twenty years old.

"Copyright of *Childe Harold*, 600*l*.

"Copyright of *Corsair*, 500*l*.

"And 50*l*. for his nephew on entering the army; in all, 1350*l*., and not 600*l*. or 700*l*. as the worthy accountant reckons."

Here the noble Lord is clearly of opinion, that money and money's worth are one and the same thing. He was therefore prepared, could occasion have possibly arisen, to bring in a similar account to Mr. Moore, for the sum of 2000*l*. The truth is, Mr. Moore's notion in this matter is a common-place; and I used to think him higher above common-places than he is. I should look upon myself as more tied, and rendered more dependent, by living as he does among the great, and flattering the mistakes of the vulgar, than by accepting thousands from individuals whom I loved. When I came to know Lord Byron as I did, I could no more have accepted his manuscripts than his money, unless I could prove to myself that I had a right to them in the way of business. Till then, I would as soon have taken the one as the other, if I took any. The reader shall see what I have done in that way, and I am not ashamed of it, though I confess I would willingly have to make the acknowledgment to

a different state of society. One does not like to be thought ill of by any body; but if I am to choose, I would rather have the good construction of half a dozen individuals really generous, than the good word of all the multitudes, who are agreed only to flatter, to feed on, and to fight shy of one another.

Here is one of Mr. Hunt's more pleasant recollections of Mr. Moore "fourteen years ago":

"I remember when I was showing him and Lord Byron the prison-garden, a smart shower came on, which induced Moore to button up his coat, and push on for the interior. He returned instantly, blushing up to the eyes. He had forgotten the lameness of his noble friend. "How much better you behaved," said he to me afterwards, "in not hastening to get out of the rain! I quite forgot, at the moment, whom I was walking with." I told him, that the virtue was involuntary on my part, having been occupied in conversation with his Lordship, which he was not; and that to forget a man's lameness involved a compliment in it, which the sufferer could not dislike." "True," says he; "but the devil of it was, that I was forced to remember it, by his not coming up. I could not in decency go on; and to return was very awkward." This anxiety appeared to me very amiable.

LORD BYRON.

We now proceed to quote a page or two from the beginning and the end of the part of Mr. Hunt's work, devoted to Lord Byron.

"The first time I saw Lord Byron, he was rehearsing the part of Leander, under the auspices of Mr. Jackson, the prize-fighter. It was in the river Thames, before he went to Greece. I had been bathing, and was standing on the floating-machine adjusting my clothes, when I noticed a respectable-looking manly person, who was eyeing something at a distance. This was Mr. Jackson waiting for his pupil. The latter was swimming with somebody for a wager. I forgot what his Chiron said of him; but he spoke in terms of praise. I saw nothing in Lord Byron at that time, but a young man who, like myself, had written a bad volume of poems; and though I had a sympathy with him on this account, and had more respect for his rank than I was willing to suppose, my sympathy was not an agreeable one; so contenting myself with seeing his Lordship's head bob up and down in the water, like a buoy, I came away.

"Lord Byron was afterwards pleased to regret that I had not stayed. He told me, that the sight of my volume at Harrow had been one of his incentives to write verses, and that he had had the same passion for friendship that I had displayed in it. To my astonishment, he quoted some of the lines, and would not hear me speak ill of them. This was when I was in prison, where I first became personally acquainted with his Lordship. His harbinger was Moore. Moore told me, that besides liking my politics, he liked 'The Feast of the Poets,' and would be glad to make my acquaintance. I said I felt myself highly flattered, and should be proud to entertain his Lordship as well as a poor patriot could. He was accordingly invited to dinner. His friend only stipulated, that there should be 'plenty of fish and vegetables for the noble bard,' his Lordship at that time being Brahminical in his eating. He came, and we passed a very pleasant afternoon, talking of books, and school, and the Reverend Mr. Bowles; of the pastoral innocence of whose conversation some anecdotes were related that would have much edified the spirit of Pope had it been in the room.

"I saw nothing at first but single-hearted and agreeable qualities in Lord Byron. My wife, with the quicker eyes of a woman, was inclined to doubt them. Visiting me one day, when I had a friend with me, he seemed uneasy, and asked, without ceremony, when he should find me alone. My friend, who was a man of taste and spirit, and the last in the world to intrude his acquaintance, was not bound to go away because another person had come in; and besides, he naturally felt anxious to look at so interesting a visitor; which was paying the latter a compliment. But his Lordship's will was disturbed, and he vented his spleen accordingly. I took it at the time for a piece of simplicity, blinded perhaps by the flattery insinuated towards myself; but my wife was right. Lord Byron's nature, from the first, contained that mixture of disagreeable with pleasanter qualities, which I had afterwards but too much occasion to recognize. He subsequently called on me in the prison several times, and used to bring books for my story of Rimini, which I was then writing. He would not let the footman bring them in. He would enter with a couple of quartos under his arm; and give you to understand (as I thought) that he was

prouder of being a friend and a man of letters, than a lord. It was thus that by flattering one's vanity, he persuaded us of his own freedom from it; for he could see very well at that time, that I had more value for lords than I supposed. He was a warm politician, and thought himself earnest in the cause of liberty. His failure in the House of Lords is well known. He was very candid about it; said he was much frightened, and should never be able to do any thing that way. Lords of all parties came about him, and consoled him; he particularly mentioned Lord Sidmouth as being unaffectedly kind. When I left prison I was too ill to return his visits. He pressed me very much to go to the theatre with him; but illness, and the dread of committing my critical independence, alike prevented me. His Lordship was one of a management that governed Drury-lane Theatre at that time, and that made a sad business of their direction, as amateur managers have always done. He got nothing by it but petty vexations, and a good deal of scandal.

"I was then living at Paddington. I had a study looking over the fields towards Westbourne Green; which I mention because, besides the pleasure I took in it after my prison, and the gratitude I owe to a fair cousin, who saved me from being burnt there one fine morning, I received visits in it from two persons of a remarkable discrepancy of character—Lord Byron and Mr. Wordsworth. Of Mr. Wordsworth I speak hereafter. Lord Byron, I thought, took a pleasure in it, as contrasted with the splendour of his great house. He had too much reason to do so. His domestic troubles were then about to become public. His appearance at that time was the finest I ever saw it, a great deal finer than it was afterwards, when he was abroad. He was fatter than before his marriage, but only just enough so to complete the manliness of his person; and the turn of his head and countenance had a spirit and elevation in it, which, though not unmixed with disquiet, gave him altogether a nobler look than I ever knew him to have before or since. His dress, which was black, with white trousers, and which he wore buttoned close over the body, completed the succinctness and gentlemanliness of his appearance. I remember one day, as he stood looking out of the window, he resembled, in a lively manner, the portrait of him by Phillips, by far the best that has appeared; I mean the best of him at his best time of life, and the most like him in features as well as expression. He sat one morning so long, that Lady Byron sent up twice to let him know she was waiting. Lady Byron used to go on in the carriage to Henderson's nursery-ground to get flowers. I had not the honour of knowing her, nor ever saw her but once, when I caught a glimpse of her at the door. I thought she had a pretty earnest look, with her "pippin" face; an epithet by which she playfully designated herself.

"The first visit I paid Lord Byron was just after their separation. The public, who took part with the lady, as they ought to do (women in their relations with the other sex being under the most unhandsome disadvantages) had, nevertheless, no idea of the troubles which her husband was suffering at that time. He was very ill, his face jaundiced with bile; the renouement of his society by Lady Byron had disconcerted him extremely, and was, I believe, utterly unlooked for; then the journals and their attacks upon him, were felt severely; and, to crown all, he had an execution in his house. I was struck with the real trouble he manifested, compared with what the public thought of it. The adherence of his old friends was also touching. I saw Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Scrope Davies (college friends of his) almost every time I called. Mr. Rogers was regular in his daily visits; and Lord Holland, he said, was very kind to him. Finally, he took the blame of the quarrel to himself; and he enlisted my self-love so far on the side of Lady Byron, as to tell me that she liked my poem, and had compared his temper to that of Giovanni, my [heroine's] consort. In all this I beheld only a generous nature, subject perhaps to ebullitions of ill temper, but candid, sensitive, extremely to be pitied, and if a woman knew how, or was permitted by others to love him, extremely to be loved.

"What made me come the more warmly to this conclusion, was a letter which he showed me, written by Lady Byron after her departure from the house, and when she was on her way to the relations who persuaded her not to return. It was signed with the epithet above-mentioned; and was written in a spirit of good-humour, and even fondness, which though containing nothing but what a wife ought to write, and is the better for writing, was, I thought, almost too good to show. But the case was extreme; and the compliment to me, in showing it, appeared the greater. I

was not aware at that time, that with a singular incontinence towards which it was lucky for a great many people that his friends were singularly considerate, his Lordship was in the habit of making a confidant of every body he came nigh.

We add Mr. Hunt's general summing up of his Lordship's habits and character :

He had a delicate white hand, of which he was proud, and he attracted attention to it by rings. He thought a hand of this description almost the only mark remaining now-a-days of a gentleman; which it certainly is not, nor of a lady either; though a coarse one implies handwork. He often appeared holding a handkerchief, upon which his jewelled fingers lay imbedded, as in a picture. He was as fond of fine linen as a Quaker; and had the remnant of his hair oiled and trimmed with all the anxiety of a Sardanapalus. The visible character to which this effeminacy gave rise appears to have indicated itself as early as his travels in the Levant, where the Grand Signior is said to have taken him for a woman in disguise. But he had tastes of a more masculine description. He was fond of swimming to the last, and used to push out to a good distance in the Gulf of Genoa. He was also, as I have before mentioned, a good horseman; and he liked to have a great dog or two about him, which is not a habit observable in timid men. Yet I doubt greatly whether he was a man of courage. I suspect that personal anxiety, coming upon a constitution unwisely treated, had no small hand in hastening his death in Greece. The story of his bold behaviour at sea, in a voyage to Sicily, and of Mr. Shelley's timidity, is just reversing what I conceive would have been the real state of the matter, had the voyage taken place. The account is an impudent fiction. Nevertheless, he volunteered voyages by sea when he might have eschewed them; and yet the same man never got into a coach without being afraid. In short, he was the contradiction his father and mother had made him. To lump together some more of his personal habits, in the style of old Aubrey, he spelt affectedly, swore somewhat, had the Northumbrian burr in his speech, did not like to see women eat, and would merrily say, that he had another reason for not liking to dine with them; which was, that they always had the wings of the chicken.

For the rest,

"Ask you why Byron broke through every rule?"

"Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool."

He has added another to the list of the Whartons and Bückinghams, though his vices were, in one respect, more prudent, his genius greater, and his end a great deal more lucky. Perverse from his birth, educated under personal disadvantages, debauched by ill companions, and perplexed between real and false pretensions, the injuries done to his nature were completed by a success too great even for the genius he possessed; and as his life was never so unfortunate as when it appeared to be most otherwise, so nothing could happen more seasonably for him, or give him what he would most have desired under any other circumstances, than his death.

Here we pause for the present; but, should the work not be published before the appearance of our next Number, we may perhaps give some farther quotations from its pages.

MR. HAZLITT'S NAPOLEON.

We are enabled to lay before our readers the following extract from Mr. Hazlitt's forth-coming '*Life of Napoleon*.' This book is also still unpublished; when it appears we shall render a just account of it. In the meantime, the portion we present will show that it is likely to contain no ordinary attraction:

From the moment that the press opens the eyes of the community beyond the actual sphere in which each moves, there is from that time inevitably formed the germ of a body of opinion directly at variance with the selfish and servile code that before reigned paramount, and approximating more and more to the manly and disinterested standard of truth and justice. Hitherto force, fraud, and fear decided every question of individual right or general reasoning; the possessor of rank and influence, in answer to any censure or objection to his conduct, appealed to God and to his sword:—now a new principle is brought into play which had never been so much as dreamt of, and before which he must make good his pretensions, or it will shatter his strong holds of pride and prejudice to atoms, as the pent-up air shatters whatever resists its expansive force. This power is public opinion, exercised upon men, things, and general principles, and to which

mere physical power must conform, or it will crumble to powder. Books alone teach us to judge of truth and good in the abstract; without a knowledge of things at a distance from us, we judge like savages or animals from our senses and appetites only; but by the aid of books, and of an intercourse with the world of ideas, we are purified, raised, ennobled from savages into intellectual and rational beings. Our impressions of what is near to us are false, of what is distant feeble; but the last gaining strength from being united in public opinion, and expressed by the public voice, are like the congregated roar of many waters, and quail the hearts of princes. Who but the tyrant does not hate the tyrant? Who but the slave does not despise the slave? The first of these looks upon himself as a god, upon his vassal as a clod of the earth, and forces him to be of the same opinion: the philosopher looks upon them both as men, and instructs the world to do so. While they had to settle their pretensions by themselves, and in the night of ignorance, it is no wonder no good was done; while pride intoxicated the one, and fear stupefied the other. But let them be brought out of that dark cave of despotism and superstition, and let a thousand other persons be called on to determine between them who have no interest but that of truth and justice, and the plea of the lordly oppressor to make a beast of burden of his fellow-man becomes as ridiculous as it is odious. All that the light of philosophy, the glow of patriotism, all that the brain wasted in midnight study, the blood poured out upon the scaffold or in the field of battle can do, or have done, is to take this question in all cases from before the first gross, blind and iniquitous tribunal, where power insults over weakness, and place it before the last more just, disinterested, and, in the end, more formidable one, where each individual is tried by his peers, and according to rules and principles which have received the common examination, and the common consent. A public sense is thus formed, free from slavish awe, and the traditional assumption of insolent superiority, which the more it is exercised becomes the more enlightened and enlarged, and more and more requires equal rights and equal laws. This new sense acquired by the people, this new organ of opinion and feeling, is like bringing a battering-train to bear upon some old Gothic castle, long the den of rapine and crime, and must finally prevail against all absurd and antiquated institutions, unless it is violently suppressed, and this engine of political reform turned, by bribery and terror, against itself. Who, in reading history, where the characters are laid open, and the circumstances fairly stated, and where he himself has no false bias to mislead him, does not take part with the oppressed against the oppressor? Who is there that admires Nero at the distance of two thousand years? Did not the 'Tartuffe' in a manner too religious hypocrisy out of France; and was it not on this account constantly denounced by the clergy? What do those, who read the annals of the Inquisition, think of that dread tribunal? And what has softened its horrors but those annals being read? What figure does the massacre of St. Bartholomew make in the eyes of posterity! But books anticipate and conform the decision of the public, of individuals, and even of the actors in such scenes, to that lofty and irrevocable standard, mould and fashion the heart and inmost thoughts upon it, so that something manly, liberal, and generous, grows out of the fever of passion and the palsy of base fear; and this is what is meant by the progress of modern civilization and modern philosophy. An individual, in a barbarous age and country, throws another, who has displeased him, (without other warrant than his will,) into a dungeon, where he pines for years, and then dies; and, perhaps, only the mouldering bones of the victim, discovered long after, disclose his fate; or if known at the time, the confessor gives absolution, and the few who are let into the secret are intimidated from giving vent to their feelings, and hardly dare disapprove in silence. Let this act of violence be repeated afterwards in story, and there is not an individual in the whole nation, whose bosom does not swell with pity, or whose blood does not curdle within him at the recital of this foul wrong. Why, then, should there be an individual in a nation privileged to do what no other individual in the nation can be found to approve? But he has the power, and will not part with it in spite of public opinion. Then that public opinion must become active, and break the moulds of prescription in which his right derived from his ancestors is cast, and this will be a revolution. Is that a state of things to regret or bring back, the bare mention of which makes one shudder? But the form, the shadow of it only was left; then why keep up that form, or cling to a shadow of

injustice which is no less odious than contemptible, except it were to mock, or to betray? Let all the wrongs public and private produced in France by arbitrary power and exclusive privileges for a thousand years be collected in a volume, and let this volume be read by all who have hearts to feel or capacity to understand, and the strong, stifling sense of oppression and kindling burst of indignation that would follow will be that impulse of public opinion that led to the French Revolution. Let all the victims that have perished under the mild, paternal sway of the ancient regime, in dungeons and in agony, without a trial, without an accusation, without witnesses, be assembled together, and their chains struck off, and the shout of jubilee and exultation they would make, or that nature would make at the sight, will be the shout that was heard when the Bastille fell! The dead pause that ensued among the Gods of the earth, the rankling malice, the panic-fear, when they saw law and justice raised to an equality with their sovereign will, and mankind no longer doomed to be their sport, was that of fiends robbed of their prey: their struggles, their arts, their unyielding perseverance, and their final triumph was that of fiends when it is restored to them! —Vol. I. p. 88.

THE SCIENCES.

Elements of Physics, or Natural Philosophy, General and Medical, explained independently of Technical Mathematics. By N. ARNOTT, M.D. Second Edition. 8vo. Underwood. London, 1827.

MANY of our readers may probably look upon Natural Philosophy with the same dread with which our forefathers were wont to regard the Science of Magic, and consider it as a department of study hardly, if at all, to be adventured upon by the mere unassisted faculties of humanity. Its professors, indeed, we confess, have hitherto done as much as in them lay to give to it all the air and aspect of a *black art*, and to present it to the contemplation of the uninitiated with more than mortal terrors on its front. Let a common reader open any one of the volumes in which its mysteries are said to be treasured up, and he finds himself landed at once among worse than the impracticabilities of an unknown tongue, beset as he is on every side by terms, and other marks of thought, which no lexicon may interpret, and entangled among the meshes of a species of composition which all the principles of syntax with which he has hitherto been familiar are utterly incapable of unravelling. He might just as well attempt to read the veins in the wood of his table, or to translate the grotesque forms of the clouds that flit across his windows. The repulsive chaos of letters, and numerals, and lines, and diagrams, which lies outspread before him, seems to him, indeed, nothing more than a confused assemblage of the mere rubbish of the printing-office, out of which it would be as vain a folly to endeavour to decypher aught of mind or of meaning, as it would be to look for the form and dimensions of some yet unexisting edifice in the quarry out of which it was to be built.

A person, in fact, in attempting to learn Natural Philosophy from any of the common treatises on the subject, cannot advance a page without finding that he must make himself master of nearly half a dozen other sciences before he can hope to obtain so much as an introduction to the arcanæ of this. Geometry, Trigonometry, Arithmetic, Algebra, Fluxions, are all, he perceives, assumed to be already known to him by the very considerate author. No wonder, therefore, that he shuts the book; and, whatever may have been his wish to know something of the constitution of nature, gives up all thoughts of ever again seeking to gratify his curiosity by the study of what is called Natural Philosophy. A pupil, led on gradually, and as it were blindfold, during his attendance at school or college, from one to another of these multifarious acquirements, may eventually reach the end of the series: but to expect that people who have been previously made aware of the length of the way, will be dis-

posed to undertake the toilsome journey for the mere sake of getting at something which lies at its termination, is really to count upon a degree of mental hardihood in the species, which even the *nil mortalibus arduum*, which has been sometimes considered as their motto, would scarcely justify us in demanding.

The admirable work before us, however, brings at last the Philosophy of Nature home to our very doors. Scarcely a generation has passed away since it was held to be impossible for any one to learn Latin except by means of a Grammar written in Latin;—a species of belief very much akin to the philosophy of the sagacious person mentioned by Hierocles, who was wont to give it as his opinion, that the best way for people to avoid all danger of being drowned, was for them all to learn to swim before venturing to approach the water. We have now found out, however, not only that Latin may be acquired through the medium of English, but even that Greek itself may be approached through the same short and familiar avenue.

The same thing that has thus recently been done for the literature of Greece and Rome, is here done by Dr. Arnott for the principles and demonstrations of physics. He has made a highway for us to the very heart of the subject out of the words and phrases of our mother-tongue. He has translated the language of the science into English, and rendered that which was wont to be, to all but a chosen few, as speech to the dumb, audible and intelligible to every one of us. Or rather, he has, for the first time, taught the science, with which we never could converse before without the aid, not of one, but of a whole retinue of interpreters, to speak to the people of every country under heaven directly and in their own language; for his work has only to be translated into French, or Italian, or Spanish, or German, to put those to whom any one of these tongues is vernacular in possession of the same free access to this hitherto jealously barricaded department of knowledge, which has just been opened up to ourselves.

We regard this publication of Dr. Arnott's as one of the most valuable presents that have been made to the reading public in our day. It is, we assure our readers, in the first place, notwithstanding its popular character, both a very comprehensive and a very learned work, and evidently the production of a mind intimately and profoundly conversant with the transcendental science of its subject, as well as gifted in a very extraordinary degree with the power of rendering its most abstract truths both intelligible and interesting to those who bring to the study of it only the science of common experience and common sense. The book, addressed as it is to the public in general, is, in truth, as worthy of the perusal of the accomplished mathematician, as if it had been written for him alone. It contains, too, not only a complete account of every thing important that has been hitherto known with regard to the branches of physics of which it treats; but no little matter besides, in the way both of disquisition and practical suggestion, that is altogether new even to the scientific world, and that abundantly establishes the claim of the author to no ordinary rank as an ingenious inventor, and an original and subtle speculator. Yet, with all this, it is essentially, and, in every respect, a book for the people. There is nothing in it which any person of ordinary capacity may not understand, scarcely any thing by which every person who can read and think is not sure to be interested. Take it as a mere record of facts, a catalogue of the phenomena, whether near or distant, whether grand or minute, of that nature which is on every side of us; and we know not where we could point to a more comprehensive assemblage of all that is curious and wonderful, either among the goings-on of the material universe, or among those processes and contrivances of art by which man has tamed even

the wildest of the elements, and made the fire and the air and the water his ministering servants. But these facts are not merely recorded as in a catalogue; the rationale of each is given with the most scientific precision, although with the most perfect simplicity and perspicuity of language; all are arranged in the most luminous subordination to the principles whose operation they exemplify, and each is made to bear its part in illustrating that grand system of harmonious truths which it is the object of the author to unfold. Nor is this description of, and inquisition into, the anatomy of the material world, a mere series of demonstrations by a dry and unsympathizing mechanician, who gives himself no concern about aught except the cold and comparatively uninviting materialities of his theme. The charm of the book, on the contrary, lies more, perhaps, than in any thing else, in what we would call the spirit of human interest which pervades and animates it—in those irradiations of heart and of fancy which give their light and their glow to so many of its pages,—in that perpetual presence, in short, of something which makes us feel that we are communing with one who values science for the sake of its living soul, and not for that of its worthless symbols; and whose philosophy is not more that of the mathematician, than that of the metaphysician, the moralist, and the poet.

It was impossible that the merits of such a work should fail to be appreciated by the public; and it has accordingly, we are glad to perceive, reached a second edition, with a celerity which we should think is almost unexampled by any previous publication of a similar description. We cannot, in the brief space that remains to us, pretend to give any thing like an analysis of its contents: but for the sake of those of our readers, in whose way it may not yet have fallen, we shall give one or two short extracts from it, merely to indicate to them the sort of entertainment they may anticipate from its perusal.

The volume is introduced by a dissertation on the nature of human knowledge and the mutual dependence of its several departments, written throughout with great felicity of expression, and often with striking eloquence, and exemplifying very remarkably that universality of taste and attainment, as well as those enlarged views, and that habit of profound philosophic reflection, which give its character to the richly endowed mind of the author. From many brilliant passages, however, we have room to extract only the following:

‘But, indeed, what part of natural philosophy is not interesting to a medical man, since the whole is becoming every day more and more a part of a liberal education? In our cities, and even in an ordinary dwelling-house now, a man is surrounded by miracles of mechanic art; and with his proud reason, is he to use these, as careless of how they are produced, as a horse is of how the corn falls into his manger? A general diffusion of knowledge is now elevating the human character in all ranks of society, and rendering the condition of men very different from that of their remote forefathers. These, generally divided into small states, or societies, had few relations of amity with surrounding tribes, and their thoughts and interests were confined very much within their own little territories and rude habits. In succeeding ages they found themselves belonging to larger communities, as when the English heptarchy was united; but still remote kingdoms and quarters of the world were of no interest to them, and were often totally unknown. Now, however, every one sees himself a member of one vast civilized society, which covers the face of the earth; and no part of the earth is indifferent to him.

‘In England, a man of small fortune may cast his regards around him, and say, with truth and exultation, “I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts, which even a king could not command some centuries ago. There are ships crossing the seas in every direction, to bring me what is useful to me from all parts of the earth. In China, men are gathering the tea-leaf for me; in America, they are planting cotton for me; in the West India Islands they are preparing my sugar and my coffee; in Italy they are feeding silk-worms for me;

in Saxony they are shearing the sheep to make me clothing; at home, powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me, and making cutlery for me, and pumping the mines, that minerals useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have post-coaches running day and night on all the roads to carry my correspondence; I have roads, and canals, and bridges, to bear the coal for my winter fire; nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among all these people who serve me; and in a corner of my house, I have books! the miracle of all my possessions, more wonderful than the wishing-cap of the Arabian Tales; for they transport me instantly not only to all places, but to all times. By my books I can conjure up before me, to vivid existence, all the great and good men of antiquity; and for my individual satisfaction, I can make them act over again the most renowned of their exploits; the orators declaim for me; the historians recite; the poets sing; in a word, from the equator to the pole, and from the beginning of time until now, by my books I can be where I please.” This picture is not overcharged, and might be much extended; such being the miracle of God's goodness and providence, that each individual of the civilized millions that cover the earth, may have nearly the same enjoyments as if he were the single lord of all.’

The following extract is from the chapter on Hydrostatics:

‘The supply and distribution of water in a large city, since the steam-engine was added to the apparatus, approaches closely to the perfection of Nature's own work in the circulation of blood through the animal body. From the great pumps of a high reservoir a few main pipes issue to the chief divisions of the town; these send suitable branches to every street; the branches again divide for the lanes and alleys; and at last, into every house, a small leaden conduit rises, which, if required, carries its precious freight into the separate apartments, and yields it there to the turning of a cock. A corresponding arrangement of drains and sewers, constructed with the greatest exactness, in obedience to the law of level, receives the water again, when it has answered its purposes, and carries it to be purified in the great laboratory of the ocean. And so admirably complete and perfect is this counter-system of sloping channels, that a heavy shower may fall, and after washing and purifying every superficial spot in the city, and sweeping completely all the subterranean passages, it may, within the space of an hour, be again collected in the river passing by. It is the recurrence of this almost miracle of extensive, sudden, and perfect purification, which has made London the most healthy, although the largest city in the world.

‘English citizens have now become so habituated to the blessing of a supply of pure water, more than sufficient for all their purposes, that it causes them no more surprise than the regularly returning light of day, or warmth of summer. But a retrospects into past times may still awaken us to a sense of our obligation to advancing art. How often, formerly, did periodical pestilences arise from deficiency of water, and how often has fire devoured whole cities, which a timely supply of water might have saved. Kings have been accounted worthy of divine honours, for having constructed aqueducts to lead the pure streams from the mountains into the peopled towns. In the present day, only he who has travelled on the sandy plains of Asia or Africa, where a well is more prized than mines of gold, or who has spent months on ship-board, where the fresh-water is often doled out with more caution than the most precious product of the still, or who has vividly sympathised with the shipwrecked man spreading out his garments to catch the rain from heaven, and then, with mad eagerness, sucking the delicious moisture into his cracked lips—only he can appreciate fully the blessing of that abundant supply which most of us now so thoughtlessly enjoy. The author will long remember the intense momentary regret with which, on once approaching a beautiful land, after months spent at sea, he saw a little stream of fresh water sliding over a rock into the salt waves—it appeared to him that he was witnessing a most precious essence, by some accident pouring out to waste.’

The following paragraph is from the account of the barometer:

‘To the husbandman the barometer is of considerable use, by aiding and correcting the prognostics of the weather, which he draws from local signs familiar to him; but its great use, as a weather-glass, seems to be to the mariner, who roams over the whole ocean, and is often under skies and climates altogether new to

him. The watchful captain of the present day, trusting to this extraordinary monitor, is frequently enabled to take in sail, and to make ready for the storm, where, in former times, the dreadful visitation would have fallen upon him unprepared. The marine barometer has not yet been in general use for many years; and the author was one of a numerous crew, who probably owed their preservation to its almost miraculous warning. It was in a southern latitude. The sun had just set with placid appearance, after a beautiful afternoon, and the usual mirth of the evening-watch was proceeding, when the captain's order came to prepare with all haste for a storm. The barometer had begun to fall with appalling rapidity. As yet the oldest sailors had not perceived even a threatening in the sky, and were surprised at the extent and hurry of the preparations; but the required measures were not completed, when a more awful hurricane burst upon them than the most experienced had ever braved. Nothing could withstand it; the sails, already furling, and closely bound to the yards, were riven away in tatters; even the bare yards and masts were in great part disabled; and at one time the whole rigging threatened to fall by the board. Such, for a few hours, was the mingled roar of the hurricane above, of the waves around, and of the incessant peals of thunder, that no human voice could be heard, and, amidst the general consternation, even the trumpet sounded in vain. In that awful night, but for the little tube of mercury which had given the warning, neither the strength of the noble ship, nor the skill and energies of the commander, could have saved one man to tell the tale. On the following morning the wind was again at rest, but the ship lay upon the yet heaving waves, an unsightly wreck.*

But we cannot afford to multiply our quotations, although the short specimens of the work we have given convey but a very inadequate idea of the amusement and instruction contained in it. Besides, several passages in the introduction, which we should have gladly extracted, we had marked as particularly interesting, the author's reflections on rail-roads in the chapter on mechanics; his account of the gradual change of the earth's surface produced by running water, given under the head of Fluid Level; his disquisition on swimming in a subsequent part of the same chapter; his description of the properties of the steam-engine; his inquiry into the best mode of warming and ventilating houses; his admirable account of the winds or currents in the atmosphere; his observations on the course and velocity of waves; the whole of his dissertation on music; his masterly remarks on the nature of the human voice and analysis of the elements of speech, &c. &c. For all the valuable information, however, with which we are presented under these heads, and many others which we have not space even to enumerate, we can now only refer our readers to the work itself.

We must not, however, altogether forget to notice the important obligations under which Dr. Arnott by his present publication has laid more particularly the members of his own profession. In the medical world the work has already made a great impression, and cannot fail to produce the most important results. The two sections on Animal Mechanics, and on Animal Hydrostatics and Hydraulics, may, we venture to say, be read with profit by the ablest and most experienced members of the faculty, and are replete with much in the way, both of precept and of doctrine, of which no medical man ought to allow himself to remain in ignorance. We allude especially, to the able and in many respects novel speculations of the Author, on the cure of distorted spine, the operation of cupping, the regulation of temperature in apartments for consumptive patients, the means of treatment for stone, and the circulation of the blood.

The second edition of the work has been considerably improved, we observe, not only by a general revision of its contents, but by the occasional introduction of new facts and illustrations. Of the additional matter, however, the portion that will probably attract the greatest degree of attention in the scientific world, is a long note at p. 220, on the Treatise lately published under the title of '*Animal Mechanics*,' by the Society for

the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; the exposition given in which is certainly not a little curious. But into the consideration of this matter we cannot at present enter.

PERIODICAL CRITICISM.

REVIEWERS REVIEWED.—THE QUARTERLY.

SINCE the earliest period of our acquaintance with the Periodical Literature of England, there is nothing we have more ardently desired than a fair and ample field in which to expose the ignorance, and repel the arrogance, of those who, setting themselves up as Oracles, denounce, without mercy, all who are not of their sect or party, and claim for themselves and their coterie the exclusive admiration of mankind. Hitherto, indeed, those so denounced have been almost without remedy, as they were without appeal. A Quarterly Reviewer is much too dignified a personage to admit of any remonstrances against himself appearing in his own pages: this is a condescension left to the Weekly and the Daily Press. Nor even in this is it often permitted to others to question the accuracy of decisions coming from so high a tribunal. And yet, if the errors and absurdities of separate books be fair objects of criticism, why should not the blunders of Periodical Journals be equally so. If there be any one class of public writers more justly open than another to the vigilant scrutiny of their contemporaries, it is professed Critics: their avowed object being to set others right in matters of fact and judgment, they should themselves be especially correct. But where there is no reply admitted from the party accused,—as is almost the case with them,—all manner of wrong may be inflicted on the innocent; and the best books, and the ablest writers, be consigned to unmerited obloquy by so despotic a tribunal as that which assumes to itself the privilege of being accuser, witness, and judge, and of rejecting or suppressing all that the party condemned may address to them in explanation or defence.

It is to plant a bulwark against this insolent usurpation of arbitrary and infallible power, that we now open the portals of 'THE ATHENÆUM' to appeals, against the dicta of such oracles, to the world. We here unfurl the standard of resistance to that unjust dominion over the minds of men, which is maintained by the exclusive exhibition of accusations, and the systematic suppression of defence. Let all who deem it honourable to combat in such a cause rally round it for support; and that we may not be supposed to invite others to a contest from which we would ourselves shrink, we here lead the way.

The sins of the 'The Quarterly' have been so many and so flagrant, that it would be endless to go far back into its contents for the purpose of pointing them out. Some worthy persons had, indeed, indulged a hope that the *unfairness*, (to use a very gentle term,) which uniformly marked its conduct toward political or literary rivals, had ceased with the death of its late Editor, Mr. Gifford; and that under its present Editor, Mr. Lockhart, a new reign of 'peace and good-will towards men' had commenced. There is certainly nothing of the peculiar bitterness of its ancient days now apparent in its pages; but the deepest injustice may be committed with a smiling aspect, and death may be even dealt around with arrows dipt in honey instead of gall. The smooth and insidious destruction of a reputation by flattering phrases, covering the poison that lurks beneath, is, perhaps, more dangerous, as it is certainly less honourable, than the bold and fearless warfare of an enemy unmasked. And if the change in the character of 'The Quarterly' has only been from unveiled hostility to cunningly concealed attack, we cannot congratulate either its friends or its enemies on the alteration. Let it be our present purpose, however, to select but one recent instance, out of many, that may be added,

of the ignorance and arrogance of which we complain, that the world may judge how far our epithets are justified by facts: other and similar instances will follow anon.

We turn, therefore, at once to an article in a late 'Quarterly,' upon the work entitled 'De Vere.' As the new Editor of this Review has himself made some pretensions to the title of a novelist, it may be worth while to examine some of the opinions on works of fiction, put forth under his sanction; and, in pointing out the errors and inconsistencies that occur in every page of the article on 'De Vere,' we shall consider ourselves as doing a public service: for, as we have before observed, if criticism be good for any thing, it must do as much good in the case of Reviews as in that of other works.

The first objection which we take to the article in question is, that 'De Vere' is criticised as a *work of imagination*. Now, neither 'Tremaine' nor 'De Vere' was ever considered by the author, or presented to the world, as a work of imagination. On the contrary, in the Prefaces to both, the writer disclaims all pretensions to the title of a novelist. * 'Whoever,' says the editor, writing of 'Tremaine,' 'expects a *novel*, will be disappointed. Variety and incident are equally wanting.' Again, writing of 'De Vere,' the author says, 'It (ambition) generally shows itself by producing great situations, ending in great events; and yet those who expect such events and situations here, will be disappointed;' and in each book the author frequently expresses a hope, that he should be regarded as 'writing a treatise on moral philosophy, not a novel.' Yet the Reviewer knowing this, not only criticises as a romance, what is *not* a romance, but condemns it for not being what the author never intended it should be!

The article in question has been ascribed, we know not how truly, to the present conductor of 'The Quarterly.' If we believe this, we can at once, as Mrs. Malaprop says, 'dissolve the mystery' of all this unfairness. 'The manager writes himself': and on this account, no author but himself, and perhaps Sir Walter Scott, will ever be allowed to possess what he is pleased to call 'imaginative power.' *Nul n'aura de l'esprit, hors nous et nos amis.*

Neither this, nor even the malice of an unsuccessful novelist, will, however, quite account for the inconsistency between the praise and the censure. We must seek for the solution in causes that lie deeper in human nature. There are minds which can only be generous, or even fair, *by halves*. They may be forced by circumstances reluctantly to commend; but it is so abhorrent to their natures, that in the very act of paying a debt, they seek to neutralize its value.† To have attempted altogether to damn 'De Vere,' would have hurt the reputation of the critic, and, what is worse, the sale of the Review. It was wiser, therefore, to pretend to fall in with the opinion of the public, and then to attempt to undermine it.

But we will pass over the charge of unfairness, to inquire with what *ability* the review is executed; and we think we shall be able to show, that with whatever degree of 'imaginative power' the Reviewer may be gifted, he is not eminently endowed with *critical* power.

If the Reviewer's account of the merits of 'De Vere' be just, it is impossible the censure can be deserved. It is equally irreconcilable with common justice and common sense, that an author's book should be in one sentence lauded à *toute outrance*, and in the next, that 'his works as works'‡ should be condemned as unworthy of

* Yet the Reviewer disingenuously styles 'De Vere,' in every page of his review, 'a novel'!

† 'Une des plus grandes preuves de médiocrité, c'est de ne pas vouloir reconnaître la supériorité là où elle se trouve réellement.'—J. B. SAY.

‡ What does this mean? They can only be judged as *works*, we suppose; scarcely as *books that are not works*.

permanent favour. We do not find fault with the critic because he lauds or censures the author, but because he does *both* in such a way, that it is impossible that the praise and the blame can both be merited. The Reviewer is pleased to say, that 'the author of *'De Vere'* writes with elegance, and reminds him of Mackenzie, (whose permanent favour with the public is confessed;) that his sentiments are always pure and good; his reflections commonly just, sometimes profound; that his whole manner and style bespeak the gentleman and the scholar; and that, in all these respects, he is broadly distinguished from his rivals. What he has seen he can paint with the easy pencil of a real artist. Over all his delineations, and, indeed, over most of the dialogue, a moral colouring, equally graceful and instructive, is diffused. We have every where in his pages the liberal and humane views of a mind disciplined by much experience and much reflection; and it is truly surprising to us, that while we have one such painter of English manners among us, any favour should be bestowed on the vulgar caricatures that are every day put forth.' Speaking of a trait in the character of Clayton, the Critic says, that 'it shows the nice and delicate skill of a long practised observer of mankind;' and observes, that the heroine of *'De Vere'* 'is drawn with touches of the same fine discrimination.' Again, 'nothing can be more graceful than some of the love scenes, nothing more true and graphic than some of the political. Hence, he adds, that 'in a future review of the *Life of Lord Chatham*, he may contrast the graver work with some of the lively delineations of *'De Vere'*.'—and a startling contrast it will make, as we shall afterwards show. Finally, he is pleased to say, that 'to the author the world is indebted for some of the most pleasing writing of the time.' Yet the author thus eulogized was, in the opening, condemned as so 'deficient in imaginative power, that his work must be pronounced unworthy of permanent favour.' Let those believe this who can reconcile it with the praise just quoted, if even half that praise be deserved! The inconsistency is so gross and glaring that the critic cannot be honest: or, if honest, the height of his critical powers is easily ascertained. This, indeed, appears also from other circumstances, as we shall now show.

Finding it impossible to withhold from *'De Vere'* even his reluctant commendation, the Reviewer promulgates, *ex cathedra*, a new rule of criticism, which, if it should pass into a literary law, must for ever deprive Le Sage and Fielding, as well as the author of *'De Vere'*, of all the honours of THE NOVELIST:

'All the classics of this branch of literature,' says he, 'have drawn largely upon their own personal observation and experience in life; but these would have availed them little, had they not possessed high faculties of imagination, and been, through them, enabled to fuse their materials of all kinds into an artist-like unity of form and purpose; investing actual events and real persons with the colours of poetry, and blending old things with new so thoroughly as to merit the praise of creation.'—*Quarterly Review*, p. 269.

The little that can be comprehended of this mystical piece of German criticism is true, not of 'all the classics in this branch of literature,' but only of some; and none of those of the highest order. That the colours of poetry should, for example, be thrown over the domestic novel—the novel of real life—would not be an excellence, but a gross defect; and, therefore, 'all the classics in this branch of literature' have carefully avoided it. Besides, how can 'actual persons and real events' be made poetical, without not only de-stroying their truth and nature, but their identity? They would no longer be actual events and real persons,—but something else. Look at the practice of 'all the classics' of novel writing from Cervantes to our own day. *'Don Quixote'*, indeed, is poetical, because he is exalted by madness; and Fielding himself, if he had had a madman to introduce, would have made him poetical too, from the mere abstract of love of truth and keeping.

But even the Don is real, though romantic; and nothing can be so true to naked nature as all the rest of the characters in the romance of Cervantes. We are quite sure that Sancho, the muleteers, the innkeepers, mariornes, the curate, and Master Nicholas, the barber, are all existing in Spain at this very hour, uninvested with any poetical colouring, but dressed in their habits as they lived in Don Quixote's time. The priests, valets, players, women, beaux, courtiers, and sharpers, in *'Gil Blas'*, are all similarly and signally true to nature. We say nothing of the *episodes* of both authors, because these, 'The Quarterly' Reviewer contends, do not form any part of a novel. Again, in Fielding, is there a single romantic character but Parson Adams? And he, like the Don, is insane,—that is to say, absent almost to insanity. Fielding drew human nature as he saw it actually existing. We may laud the gods that they did not make him poetical. If they had, what should we not have lost in the characters of Tom Jones, and Blifil, and Sophia, and Squire Western, and Mrs. Honour? in Booth, and Amelia, Colonel Bath, and Mrs. Bennett? in Joseph Andrews, Fanny, Lady Booby, and the accomplished Slip-slop? What places Smollet below Fielding but his exuberant display of imagination in his caricatures, and his want of adherence to pure nature? Defoe is truth itself. Madame D'Arblay's power lies in her acuteness of observation and fidelity of portrait-painting; and Miss Edgeworth's novels are the very essence of real nature and common sense.

We might quote numerous other instances, but these will do; and if we exclude Cervantes, Le Sage, Fielding, Defoe, Madame D'Arblay, and Miss Edgeworth, from the list of classics, we may ask who *are* 'the classics in this branch of literature' in the opinion of this critic? He may mean nothing but gypsies and mad women, crusaders, seers, and men in armour; but if he means anything by 'investing actual events and real persons with the colouring of poetry,' he means, that such writers as we have named, would have been improved by adopting the practice of the German Romancers, or of some of the forgotten French Novelists, by making their personages shadowy abstractions, or refining them down into sickly sentimentalism, instead of describing human beings—creatures of flesh and blood, real men and women—as they do, always did, and always will exist in actual life. This is a monstrous proposition; but it is, nevertheless, as far as we can comprehend his unintelligible rule, that of the Quarterly Reviewer; who should be told, moreover, that 'blending old things with new' is only combination, and by no means 'merits the praise of creation.' The things existed before.

The critic having, however, laid down this sensible and well-supported rule, proceeds to apply it to the author of *'De Vere.'* 'It is this deficiency of imaginative power,' says he, 'that ALONE prevents the author of *'Tremaine'* from taking his place among the classics of English Romance.' But, on turning the leaf, we find that it cannot be 'ALONE the deficiency of imaginative power,' but something else; for, according to the critic, the author 'has no skill whatever in constructing a fable; he cannot sustain a lively interest of action. His merit never lies in the dramatic development of a character, scarcely ever in the management of an incident.' Here, then, we find that the author of *'De Vere'* wants art and skill, as well as genius: and, if this be so, how does the work merit the praise before quoted? *Si vous n'êtes pas digne d'être Capucin, de quoi donc êtes-vous digne?*

If the author has neither invention nor art,—if he cannot sustain a lively interest of action,—if he cannot develop a character, or manage an incident,—how does it happen that nothing can be more touching than some of his love scenes; nothing more graphic than some of the political? How can he paint like a real artist? how can there be diffused over all his delineations and most of his dialogues, a moral colouring, equally graceful and

instructive; how can his heroine be touched with fine discrimination? how can he be such a painter of English manners as to make it surprising that others should be tolerated? Here is inconsistency! and it is wound up by the author's being told, that though he may go down to posterity in the 'Elegant Extracts,' he must not hope for a place in the 'Novelist's Library,'—a publication respecting which we are in a state of happy ignorance.

The Reviewer then proceeds to 'hazard another general criticism,' which he lays down in these precise words: 'Goethe says somewhere, that that is a bad romance, the moral drift and scope of which may be extracted in the form of one distinct proposition. But the rule, if it be right as a general one, which, after all, we much doubt, is certainly not applicable to *Tremaine* or *De Vere*!!' This must be allowed to be a magnificent specimen of acute criticism. The critic introduces a rule, which, after all, is, in his own opinion, not a rule—at least he 'much doubts it;' and we fear he will not find many examples in novel writing to support it. And for what purpose is this rule (which is not a rule) introduced? Only to show, as he tells us expressly, that it is not applicable either to *'Tremaine'* or *'De Vere.'*

Why, then, did he introduce it? That it might lead him to complain, if we read aright his meaning in an involved sentence, (which exhausts no less than twenty-four lines,) that 'the moral of *"De Vere"* is not to prove the comparative worthlessness of ambition in the abstract as applied to all cases, or even to a great variety of cases,' but merely to show that it is better to be happy without it. From this it should seem that in this acute gentleman's mind, the author's object was, or ought to have been, to prove that political ambition was a thing worthless in the abstract; in which, as a general opinion, if this be the critic's, we fear his philosophy is not worth much; if he takes it to be the doctrine of *'De Vere,'* he must be lamentably deficient in powers of apprehension.

The critic in another place says, 'To give one example of deficiency in art, there are in this one novel of *'De Vere'* several episodes introduced with PRECISELY as much propriety as the story of The Man of the Hill in *'Tom Jones,'* or that of Lady Vane in *'Peregrine Pickle.'* The author of *'De Vere'* will probably be consoled for the charge of 'deficiency in art,' when he finds that the mightiest masters of novel-writing in our language are condemned in common with him for the same sin. But the Reviewer's opinion about episodes in general, and particularly of those in *'De Vere,'* deserve some little examination. They seem, indeed, decisive as to his critical powers. Where he found that the actors in an episode must necessarily be also characters in the principal story, (for this, if we rightly understand some very obscure passages, seems to be his meaning,) we are yet to learn. We beg our readers to make an experiment upon the following sentence: 'It may be alleged that the personages thus unceremoniously introduced and dismissed, though they have no part whatever in the action of the piece, sometimes say things that influence the mind of the hero. This is no apology whatever. It is the business of a man who composes a work of art, to include in its action all the persons necessary for the complete development of its purpose.' Well, in *'De Vere'* are not 'all the persons necessary for the development of its purpose' included in its action? And does the introduction of other persons, not so necessary to the action, yet producing an influence on the mind of the hero, militate against this? Given as a reason it is admirable, for it is absolutely inconsequential; and argues the total want of a logical understanding, which we humbly presume, a critic's ought to be. Technically speaking, there is here no minor included in the major; and, consequently, it is one of those forms of syllogism which admit no conclusion.

Without, however, going into the nice questions

about episodes, started by all critics from Aristotle down to Bossu, may we not define an episode to be, in the words of our national dictionary, 'an incidental narrative or digression, SEPARABLE from the main subject, yet naturally rising from it'? If this be correct, does the Critic mean to complain of the story of 'The Man of Content,' or that of 'Archer,' or, 'The History of the Man of Imagination,' as not being 'incidental narratives, rising out of the main subject'? If these are the episodes he means, and there are no others, the author needs not take refuge in the opinion of the world, which is completely against the Reviewer; but may ask him, what can more legitimately correspond with the definition in Johnson? They are all 'incidental, separable from the main story, yet connected with it.' They are so, because there is not a word in any of them which does not relate to the great subject of the work itself,—ambition, and the antidotes to ambition. The Critic allows *this himself* when he acknowledges, that the personages introduced 'say things that influence the mind (and, of course, the conduct) of the hero.' This evidently, and at once, makes them actors. According to the Reviewer, however, they are introduced with 'PRECISELY as much propriety as the Old Man of the Hill in 'Tom Jones,' or Lady Vane in 'Peregrine Pickle;' stories which, as every one knows, have no connection whatever with those works!! If this be the Reviewer's understanding of the word 'precisely,' if this be the precision of his critical faculties, the author may be proud of the censure of such a writer, but has little cause to dread it. The Critic reminds us of certain Judges in courts of law, whose decisions, had they been given without reasons, would have stood, and been submitted to; but being given with reasons, have all been overturned.

The subject is tempting—but we must not proceed. Other matters press equally on our space and attention; but we shall pursue THE REVIEWER to his last inch of holding-ground in our next.

THE FINE ARTS.

ON THE NATURAL SOURCES OF ACCURATE PERCEPTION IN THE ARTS.

Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stood as captives, and would not depart—
Away—there needs no words, or terms precise,
The ptery jargon of the marble mart,
Where poetry gulls folly; we have eyes,
Breast, pulse, and blood confirm the Dardian shepherd's prize.

It appears to us to be a growing opinion, that the perceptions of men in cultivated society are sufficient, without an education specially to that end, to enable them to understand and appreciate the merit of Works of Art; and, without pledging ourselves for the accuracy of that opinion, or pretending to enforce it by any plea that is unanswerable, we are disposed to examine deliberately the force and sufficiency of those considerations which contribute to sustain it.

It has been said, (with how much truth it is our present purpose to inquire,) that a capacity to comprehend and appreciate the Fine Arts is not attainable except by habits of patient observation and careful analysis. These are nearly the terms of the proposition, and at least represent with fairness the principle demanded, which is as much as saying, that you cannot estimate a colour until you have ascertained its prismatic atoms, nor comprehend a figure until you have measured its proportions; in short, it is to affirm, *pro tanto*, slightly varying the terms of the assertion, that feeling and impression cannot exist unless they are elaborated by a train of nicely balanced sequences.

Such is the logical absurdity—such the apparent inconsistency attached to the incautious proposition here stated; and if the preposterous result does not sufficiently indicate the vagueness of the original premises, when separately considered, let us view it in connection with those spe-

cial and local circumstances in reference to which it was at first propounded; that is, in connection with Englishmen viewing the works of English Artists.

Before we enter on this inquiry, however, it is proper to observe, that, in general, it is a safe rule to measure the truth of a proposition by the reasonableness of its consequences; and that it is also a rule of equally general application, that where there is an extravagance in the conclusion of the reasoning, there has been a correlative extravagance in the first assumption. These are points so plain and consistent as not to admit of easy refutation; and yet, if the point in question were to be determined by a process of this sort, there is no method that would so perfectly exhibit the fallacy of this delusive tenet. But it is far from being requisite for any of the purposes entertained by us, that the proposition we are opposing should be false in its application to all persons and under all circumstances. We are prepared to admit, (and we bequeath to the other side in perpetuity the benefit of that admission,) that there are stages of society—there are degrees of intelligence—the men living in which cannot fairly estimate those higher graces, which give sentiment and spirituality to art; but the question is not encumbered with this disagreement,—it is begirt with another character, and is tending to other conclusions, when viewed in connection with persons quickened by the sensibilities, and adorned by the accomplishments of cultivated life. It is scarcely possible to doubt that those perceptions imply a sense of beauty, and those habits an acquaintance with the facts or imaginations, of which art is merely the representative. It may, indeed, be asked specially, what habits we assume, and what perceptions we imply, as necessarily co-existent with the customs of cultivated life? The answer is neither remote nor deficient; for, if we are shown the principles of Art, in gross or in detail, we will prove the maternity of those principles in the tastes, juvenile or mature, by which cultivated life is distinguished.

We are but little in danger of falling into error, in attempting to simplify the principles upon which art is founded; nor of being misled in the opinion, which it is now no secret to say we entertain, that those principles form no less the observation than the lesson of every day. Let it be remembered, however, that in attempting this simplification, we must be understood to give no more than our own view merely of what those principles consist. We are without any authority whatever for the truth of those elementary qualities which we ascribe to Art. It has of late been our lot to be disappointed in more quarters than one, as to the amount of information which we expected to receive on this subject; we have found in books a lamentable dearth; and, in conversation, a more deplorable, though a more pardonable, deficiency of acquaintance with those primary elements of Art, the exposition of which we have long searched and sighed for in vain. This is the more surprising, as the Arts are not an introduction of yesterday; they were not naturalized among us by any act of last session.

Est vetus atque probus, centum qui perficit annos; they have, therefore, even with us, the venerableness of antiquity; and, if it is not inexcusable, it is almost incredible, that, up to this time, the principles of those ancient and elegant pursuits, to a certain and serious extent, continue unstated and unexplained. Not that we think with those who on that account believe, that their delineation is a labour of a very alarming character. For example, the harmonies of quantity, colour, figure, and expression, appear to be the limit of those modifications of which Art is capable; and, therefore, let us ascertain—

1. What is the harmony of Quantity, in reference to the Fine Arts? It is the correspondency of magnitude—of extent or elevation,—and this principle provides for the proportions of objects relatively, and is the rule by which distances are indicated.

2. What is the harmony of Colour? It consists in an exemption from abrupt contrasts, and giving to objects the hues which Nature has assigned them; and this principle provides for the distribution of light and shadow, and all the intermediate variations.

3. What is the harmony of Figure? It implies the bringing together objects of an analogous outline, and shaping them into consistent arrangements; and this principle provides for the truth of objects mathematically considered, and generally for their grouping and similitudes.

4. What is the harmony of Expression? It is to sustain, at all points, a fitness of tone and character; and this principle provides for such an agreement and dependency of parts, that the sentiment of the whole shall be consecutive and concurrent.

We imagine there are few, if any, details unprovided for by this outline of general principles; and it is sufficiently plain, that an observation of these instances of proportion and variation, of the manner in which figures are arranged, and character is distributed, forms a part of the occupation of men in common life; inasmuch, that the violation of any, the least of these rules, would subject the artist to the criticism of the plainest understanding. He would be fairly amenable to the judgment of a wayfaring man; and for this reason, that his pencil would have traced, or his chisel carved, a falsification of Nature and probability. Now, what is natural and what is probable, are alike obvious to ordinary men; and Art having its basis in these two qualities, and being incapable of any modifications beyond those referred to, seems not to require any very extensive study, or extraordinary gifts, in those who are to appreciate its merits.

We have thus hastily detailed the leading principles of Art as they appear to us,—and it was requisite to do this, for opinions would have been formed at random as to the ultimate question, unless something like a definition had been attempted of those principles which form the intermediate consideration.

We regret that we cannot pursue this subject to its close without passing our assigned bounds. We promise, however, to resume it for completion in our next.

THE DRAMA.

'HAMLET.—Good, my lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do you hear, let them be well used.
'POLONIUS.—My lord, I will use them according to their desert.'

In giving our occasional attention to the Drama, our observations will not, perhaps, be exactly in the tone of the regular 'Theatrical Criticisms' which are, just now, so rife; but though we may shape them after another fashion, it may be one which our readers will ultimately like just as well. We are not among those who affect to despise the stage: our literature owes to it, beyond question, many of its brightest glories; and, during the last century, Acting, as an art, was probably that which was cultivated among us the most successfully. It is well to lament the present state of the stage; but to hold the drama generally in contempt is a mistaken affectation. The art of Shakspeare and of Congreve, of Garrick, and of Siddons, is not a subject to be so despatched. 'Nobody is now ever seen at a play,' is Mrs. Slipslop's allegation; and we all know the full force of the word *nobody*, according to that lady's vocabulary. But we confess we think that the assertion itself is much on a par with that of the footman in 'Tom Jones,' who, in criticising the 'Provoked Husband,' says, 'There was a great deal of low stuff in it about a country gentleman come up to town to stand for a Parliament-man; and there they brought a parcel of his servants upon the stage—his coachman I remember particularly; but the gentlemen in our gallery could not bear any thing so low, and they damned it.' We think the *ton* of not going to the

play very much on a par with that of 'the gentlemen' just mentioned; and we believe it to exist only among pretty nearly the same class of persons. It is true, that the conflicting of the hours of dinner and of the play does produce some effect; but let the reader who is inclined to be fashionably sceptical, run his eye over the list of names of the owners of the private boxes at the two great houses, and he will see among them those who stand upon far higher ground than any mere fashion could place them,—whose claims to distinction rest upon intellectual, as well as ancestral and aristocratical, honours.

But to us all this is matter of supreme indifference. Whether certain people do go to the play or not, does not increase or decrease the value of the individual amusements in the smallest degree. If a man be ashamed to say he has been to see *Othello*, or *The School for Scandal*, let him avow it, and proclaim his own deficiency of taste for himself.

Before we proceed to review the passing novelties of the day, let us cast a rapid *coup-d'œil* over the stage, as it exists at the commencement of our labours, at this, the beginning of the year 1828. It will show to our readers what our general ideas on the subject are, and be, as it were, a sample whereby to judge how far they may trust to our judgment, when they have no means of forming an opinion for themselves.

And first, a few words as to the present state of dramatic writing: this we must, at once, admit to be at a very low ebb indeed. Whenever, by any chance, and it is an exceedingly rare one, any thing rises to the rank of being accounted a lively and entertaining piece, it is a moral certainty that is a translation from the French;—we beg pardon, there is a daintier phrase, which, as long ago as the days of Sheridan, was fashioned to be used to 'ears polite';—such pieces are 'not translated, only taken from the French.' Really, this peddling, pilfering, work is an homage to a foreign country, which it is too degrading for a nation asserting intellectual independence, and claiming intellectual distinction, to pay. The country which has produced Shakspeare, Jonson, Fletcher, Otway, Wycherly, Vanburgh, Congreve, Farquhar, and Sheridan, cannot now put forth a two-act farce without robbing one, perhaps two, foreign pieces for its concoction. And, in nine cases out of ten, how rapid and ricketty is the production which our *Dramatists* (heaven save the mark!) thus put together! The crucible of these gentlemen seems to be possessed of properties the converse of those of Medea's kettle—what goes in fresh and vigorous comes out tottering and decrepit.

There is, again, another orchard which these 'habit and repute thieves' are accustomed to plunder. To attempt to do any thing original, they never dream of; it would be an indirect infraction of the great laws of dullness, to which their confraternity implicitly bow down; It would be an act of high treason against the august majesty of plagiarism. When, therefore, the French source fails them, they seize upon some unhappy novel, which has the bad fortune to be sufficiently conspicuous for them to covet; they turn it inside out—topsy-turvy*; retain the author's dialogue,—thus making him the unwilling pander to his own

* A most furious instance of the degree to which these things are carried, occurred a season or two ago at the Adelphi Theatre. The American novelist, Mr. Cooper's, 'Tale of the Pilot,' which has for its hero Paul Jones, and for its action his celebrated exploits on the English coast, was, by the play-wright of this establishment, regularly *inverted*,—that is to say, the adventures were given to an English vessel on the American coast, and all the author's dialogue was put, *mutatis mutandis*, into the mouths of the exactly opposite parties to those to whom it belongs in the original. To Mr. Cooper's national feelings—and from his having constantly selected his country's history as the basis of his works, we may infer the pride he takes in it—such a proceeding would not but be as gratifying as it was becoming to the political and literary honesty of our own nation.

disgrace,—retain also the title of his work, that he may not have the slender chance of escaping recognition; and thus having turned a good romance into an execrable opera or melo-drame, they talk with the utmost complacency of the success of their piece (!!) and remorselessly appropriate the profits arising from the disgorgement and destruction of a work previously of high merit and corresponding reputation! A very ludicrous rebuff which one of these gentlemen met with, has come to our knowledge: A very pretty and successful romance had undergone the usual emasculation into an opera: and, from the circumstance of the tale being interspersed with pieces of poetry, which had been adopted by the dramatist for the songs, the appropriation of the unhappy novelist's production was more than usually complete. A day or two before the opera was to come out, the dramatist brought his MS. to the publisher of the romance, (an eminent bookseller, in Bond Street,) and said that, in consequence of his being so, he thought it right to make him the first offer of the opera also. The bibliopole turned over the leaves of the MS. for a short time, and then said, "Why, Mr. —, I am thinking, if I buy your work, how far I shall be re-purchasing my own copy-right." The hint was sufficient, and the "opera now performing with immense applause," was published elsewhere.

There is also another most pitiful doctrine, or at least practice, which, as it relates to operas, may be mentioned here. It is the fashion to pay no manner of attention to the dramatic merit of an opera, but to engraft the music upon some piece, which the manager of a booth in Bartholomew Fair would toss into the mire in disdain. Not to rake up the ashes of the dead, there is, at this moment, an instance at each house of this contemptible custom. Nobody, we think, will dispute, that both the 'Seraglio' and 'Isidore de Merida,' are, as dramatic pieces, of a degree of demerit, for which the English language has no term low enough. The scenery is eminently at once gorgeous and beautiful. The music is, if not of the first class, yet sufficiently pleasing and praiseworthy; but the operas themselves! we have no term by which to characterize them.

How, then, do we stand at this time as regards dramatic writing?—TRAGEDY? There is no such thing: it scarcely even continues to be attempted. The last, as far as we recollect, are 'Ben Nazir,' and 'Foscari.' Need we, then, talk of tragedy? COMEDY?—we had a comedy last year—'The School for Grown Children',—the only regular five-act comedy that has been produced for several years.* Mr. Morton, in his best days, was one of the feeblest writers of a very feeble age; and, by this last piece, he seems to have been determined to keep up the enviable pre-eminence. As our only comedy for a considerable period, we confess that we had much rather not converse with an intelligent foreigner on the subject. OF OPERA, we have already spoken in its dramatic character: our comments on Music we reserve for our notice of the principal Singers. We will admit that we occasionally have a good laughable FARCE, and sometimes a forcible MELODRAME;—but still the besetting sin crosses our path—the latter are always, and the former generally, taken from the French.

This is but a poor picture of the existing state of our dramatic literature; but can any one deny it to be a true one? The misfortune is, that, with one or two exceptions, the writers for the Theatres hold a very low rank in literature. The crowd of literary talent which exists is all devoted to other branches of exertion. No one great, or even eminent, name writes for the stage. It is difficult, probably impossible, to account for this satisfac-

* There are one or two exceptions to this—such as 'Pride shall have a Fall,' 'Love's Victory,' &c. But the former had music to help it out; and the latter has a translation from the Spanish. Though heavy, it had a good deal of merit in the writing.

torily. We have heard it attributed to many causes, but none of them seem to us to go to the root of the matter. It has been said that the pecuniary profits are so much less than those arising from other forms of composition, that it is not worth the while of popular writers to devote their talents to the stage. But we question the truth of this. Besides the copyright—which, if the play be a successful one, may be sold for a considerable sum—the Theatre's regular rate of remuneration is certainly equivalent to what an average writer would receive for the exertion of his talents for a similar length of time to that which it would take him to write a play. And, if one of the great stars of literature were to be persuaded to compose for the stage, we are convinced that the Managers would be only too happy to pay him in proportion to his reputation. Mr. Harris gave George Colman 1,000*l.* for 'John Bull' before he had put pen to paper. This does not argue much niggardliness in paying for dramatic writing, supposing it to be worth paying for. As for the pieces stolen from the French, or transmuted from novels, of which we have been speaking above, we think they are far too highly paid; for they are treated as original compositions;—while the unhappy author, whose work has been scalped and flayed, gets nothing but his mortification for his share.

We think, then, that the reluctance of distinguished literary men to write for the stage is not attributable to the fear of scanty remuneration. We have already said we conceive it to be highly difficult satisfactorily to assign the real causes; but we incline to believe that the following are among the chief: First, we attribute it to the present fashion in literature, which sets decidedly in another direction. The high rank which narrative fiction has of late years assumed in literature,—originally, perhaps, from the merit and success of the Waverley Novels,—has undoubtedly induced an extremely large proportion of the literary talent of the country to devote itself to that style of composition. Nothing is more certain, or can be more easily traced through literary history, than the existence, successively, of these *tides* of literary taste. At one period, the bent of the age is to poetry; at another, to the drama; at a third, as now, to novels and romance. Nor is this to be attributed to servile imitation: it is no more than that the models of excellence with which the mind is, for the time, most familiar, naturally decides the *direction* of talent towards this path or that.

Another, though a secondary, cause is, we think, the reluctance to encounter an ordeal so capricious and so little to be calculated upon as that of a 'First Night.' A man who has a great reputation already won, is loth to risk it upon the chance—for it is often as completely such as the cast of a die—of how his play may 'go off' on the first night of its performance. Besides this, an actor may be dissatisfied with his part, and purposely thwart the success of the play;—such things have been done; or much of the beauty, and power, and interest of the piece may depend upon the heroine, and we have no tragic actress. Or, supposing the chief parts to be adequately filled, a sensitive poet may shrink from having his verses mangled, and his conceptions vulgarized, by the Quinees, Bottoms, Snouts, and Starclings, who are cast into the subordinate characters. We are convinced, that with a man who is already possessed of a great name, all these considerations will weigh strongly.

We now come to the existing state of the stage as regards actors; and here, we certainly have a far richer harvest of talent to contemplate. It is the fashion to speak sneeringly of the stage in this respect also, as compared with former times; but here we think great injustice is done: for, with the one exception, (and we admit it is a great one,) of the absolute want of a tragic actress, we question whether there was ever a greater sum of talent upon the stage at one time. We lay this

stress upon 'at one time' from having often heard names strung together in a retrospective eulogy of 'olden times,' which, in fact, flourished successively, and not together. Let us run over a few of the most prominent of those on the present roll.

On looking back over what we have already written, we fear that the pursuit of this second branch of our subject to its close, would extend our observations to an inconvenient length: and as we should regret breaking off at any other period of them than this, we defer entering on the proposed enumeration till our next, in which we shall be certain of carrying it through without interruption.

MR. BUCKINGHAM TO HIS READERS.

The subject of the following address being one that affects myself personally—and not relating to the collective capacity in which my own opinions, and those of the gentlemen with whom I have the honour to be associated, will be given, on the books, men, and things, which may pass under our review in the pages of 'THE ATHENÆUM,'—I think it my duty to state, frankly, what I have to say, under my own hand, and in my own name, to avoid all possible misinterpretation.

Some time after the Prospectus of 'THE ATHENÆUM' was issued, and all our preparations for its publication completed: within, indeed, a few days only of the present date, having had a personal conference with the eminent publisher, Mr. Colburn, on the subject of my last volume of 'Travels in Mesopotamia,' which was so successfully published by him during the last winter; and for the purpose of confiding to him, for publication during the present season, another volume of 'Travels through Persia,' taking up the point at which the former terminated, and pursuing the route over land to India—the conversation turned upon this new literary undertaking; and ended, without previous intimation on either side of even touching upon the subject, in a reciprocal impression that 'THE ATHENÆUM' might be considerably benefited by its receiving the valuable aid of his co-operation in all that relates to the business part of its success. The certainty, from his wealth, of commanding sufficient capital to carry the experiment through, in a bold and fearless manner; the indisputable privilege of possessing the earliest literary intelligence, the most abundant supplies of books, and the ready assistance of the most popular writers of the day; the unpurchasable advantage of securing the guidance of his experience in details, necessarily new to one who, like myself, had passed more than twenty years of his life in other countries: all these suggested themselves as powerful reasons why the giving to Mr. Colburn an equal participation in the interests of 'THE ATHENÆUM' would place beyond all manner of doubt, a success that, without such aids, even under the most talented and upright management, might be problematical. As the great object, therefore, which every man has at heart, must be the attainment of the end for which he puts certain means in motion, so, any and every thing that could contribute to make 'THE ATHENÆUM' more rich, powerful, varied, and attractive, would be deservedly objects of my approbation: and in seizing them, when presented, I should be but consulting the best interests, as well as gratification, of those by whose support and patronage alone this, or any other work, can exist.—THE PUBLIC. I, therefore, yielded my assent to an immediate union of our resources—his to swell the store of materials, and mine to use them with effect: and it was instantly and cordially met in a corresponding spirit.

The use that will, no doubt, be made of this fact, will be, that the disappointed rivals of Mr. Colburn, and the unrelenting enemies of myself—for rivals who are outstripped in the race for public favour, must view with disappointment, if not envy, their more successful competitors; and oppressors, who inflict wrong upon the advocates of liberty, never relent towards them while the sufferers continue to stand up firmly for their rights)—the use, I repeat, that these rivals and enemies will make of this fact will probably be, to insinuate that the literary independence of 'THE ATHENÆUM' will be endangered by the union. Let them endeavour to create this impression as they may. The answer, and the antidote, are both at hand. And first, Mr. Colburn has, in the most open and explicit manner, disclaimed all exercise of authority, or interference, even in the minutest particular, as to any matter connected with the literary management of the Work; leaving to me the sole and undivided power of doing whatever I may think just in this respect. Secondly, His pecuniary interest in the property is not greater than my own; so that, being Editor, as well as co-equal proprietor, he could not exercise such control, even if he wished it,—which, however, I sincerely believe he does not: since with him, as with myself, the success of 'THE ATHENÆUM' is the first object at heart; and his own stake in it is sufficiently large to prevent sinister interests from being suffered to affect this; which any interference with its independence would assuredly do. And, lastly, after the severe and multiplied trials which my own principles have undergone, in the fiery furnace of Oriental despotism,—after having risked my life in more than one contest with offended authorities, and seen the foundations of a fortune of at least 100,000*l.* swept away from beneath my feet, though a little trembling of opinion, and a slight bending to the expediency of circumstances, would have left me even more than that sum as a legacy for my children,—after this, it would be an insult to the understandings of that class, at least, to whom 'THE ATHENÆUM' will principally address itself—to suppose they could believe for a moment that so ignoble a phantom as the fear of any author's or publisher's displeasure would make me shrink from the stern and honest performance of my duty. My own heart answers—Never! And till this be seen to be a *fit* answer, I ask only for a fair trial and an honest jury, before whom I shall be always ready to appear, and render up an account of my stewardship.

Jan. 1, 1828.

J. B. BUCKINGHAM.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND SUBSCRIBERS.
The impossibility of including within any single Number of a Periodical Journal, a specimen of ALL the subjects it is intended to embrace, induces the Editor to say, that a very great variety of topics, not touched on in the present Number, will be included in future ones, as the natural operation of time and experience harmonizes the chaos of all new beginnings into form.

TO THE CONDUCTORS OF THE PUBLIC PRESS.
THE Editor of 'THE ATHENÆUM' takes this public occasion to express his sincere and cordial sense of the kind and handsome manner in which his new literary undertaking has been noticed in nearly all the Public Journals in the kingdom; to each of which a copy of the present Number is addressed, for such analysis, comment, or report, as they may see fit.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE SPHYNX.—Great disappointment having been expressed by many, at not being able to complete their Sets of THE SPHYNX, from several of the early Numbers being out of print—the Editor has resolved to begin a NEW SERIES, from Saturday next, the 5th of January, so as to afford his late Subscribers the opportunity of beginning the year with No. 1, and thus possessing a perfect Series from the opening of 1828.—Orders received by all Newsmen, and at the Office, 147, Strand.

On Tuesday, the first of January, 1828, will be published, in royal octavo, to be continued Monthly, and completed in about Forty Parts, PART I, price 8*s.*, or with the Plates coloured, 10*s.* 6*d.*

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